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Support for students with disabilities: how awareness and accommodations differ across faculty members within the postsecondary context

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Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: HOW AWARENESS AND
ACCOMMODATIONS DIFFER ACROSS FACULTY MEMBERS WITHIN THE
POSTSECONDARY CONTEXT

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Global Leadership and Change

by

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May, 2021

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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VITA

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ABSTRACT

This case study sought to determine the most salient needs of higher education faculty who instruct and accommodate students with disabilities (SWDs). Therefore, the faculty were analyzed as a community in a university setting. Currently, the accommodations that faculty provide for SWDs vary from institution to institution. Additionally, certain variables, such as faculty's years with the university, budget, size, and location of the institution impact the level of support provided and what specific accommodations SWDs receive.

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to develop an in-depth understanding of the current level of knowledge that faculty obtain for accommodating SWDs. Data were collected by triangulation from three sources: surveying and interviewing higher education faculty, examining the main policy structure, and analyzing student data and university documents. This study sought to determine what impact faculty members have on their SWDs, what current knowledge faculty have of special education policies, and what instructional techniques faculty members employ in their classrooms (Sugishita & Dresser, 2019). National special education legislation has been amended to ensure that all K-12 educators are trained and are highly qualified, yet this national mandate does not apply to higher education faculty since they obtain advanced degrees. Consequently, higher education faculty escape special education training (Smith, 2005). The primary research questions are: what are the academic supports that faculty have provided to SWDs and were these interventions successful, what is the general pattern of the university model of supporting SWDs in the University, and what do faculty recommend to their university and other universities for instructing SWDs?

In organizations, such as higher education institutions, decisions and policies are designed and employed consensually. Therefore, decisions are made in groups or committees,

often requiring a consensus to make a decision. Consequently, when policies are developed in a committee setting, there is a lesser degree of conflict among colleagues (Miandehi,1997).

The researcher used a cross-sectional approach, including surveys to gain background knowledge, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis, to gain insight into evolving themes. This study resulted in an increased in-depth understanding of accommodations used by faculty in an institutional context, including specially designed instruction and differentiation of instruction (The IDEA, 2012). Finally, it resulted in tailored training for faculty in the necessary supports and resources for postsecondary SWDs.

Key Words: Accommodations, disabilities, faculty, higher education, postsecondary

Chapter 1: Introduction

During the past 40 years, the population of postsecondary students with disabilities (SWDs) has increased significantly as a result of changes and modifications to national special education laws. The American Council on Education noted that with the passing of ADA in 1990, there has been an increase in enrollment of SWDs in higher education (McCusker, 1995). Currently, SWDs are afforded the right to apply, be admitted, and enter higher education institutions, as they are protected by federal legislation (Shanley, 2011).

In the United States, college dropout or departure (Tinto, 1988) has been prevalent among both SWDs and their nondisabled peers. Researchers have discovered a significant academic achievement gap among them, leading to a high dropout rate (Tinto, 1988). Students with disabilities are considered to be an at-risk population and susceptible to dropping out of school (Thurlow et al, 2002). Furthermore, there is evidence of poor post high-school outcomes. In 2019, 44% of students who enrolled in four-year public colleges (SWDs and nondisabled peers) departed from their college programs (EducationData.org., 2020). According to Prince et al., (2013), SWDs are more likely to drop out than their nondisabled peers, particularly among the freshmen population of postsecondary SWDs (Lefler et al., 2016). There are factors that impact the retention status of all students, but many SWDs face obstacles, specifically with completing their academic programs, which may result in them dropping out or departing from their postsecondary program (Showers & Kinsman, 2017).

Among the many factors affecting postsecondary SWDs, one that is often overlooked is how knowledge of special education instruction and accommodations differ across faculty members (Debrand & Salzberg, 2005). Furthermore, faculty knowledge of special education

laws and institutional policies affect the extent of the supports that they provide to their postsecondary SWDs (Petcu et al., 2014).

Background of Postsecondary SWDs

Researchers agree that postsecondary SWDs have been receiving conventional supports and manageable accommodations, such as peer assistance, tutoring services, and preferred seating closer to the professor at institutions for decades (Chiu et al., 2019; Madaus et al., 2012; Mazurek & Shoemaker, 1997; U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2020). Often, these supports were provided after the SWD showed proof, requested accommodations through the accessibility support on campus, or upon directly requesting them from the professor. However, SWDs may have even had to fight the university for their appropriate educational accommodations and be awarded them after much hardship (West et al., 2016). SWDs should have equal access to appropriate program accommodations, and all faculty should be competent in executing these procedures.

Presently, there is an increasing need to integrate disability awareness and supports into the broader institutional context, thus sharing the responsibility for supporting all students (Lombardi et al., 2018). Specifically, all faculty in all college and university programs must fully comprehend, articulate, and demonstrate their capacity for implementing Specially Designed Instruction (SDI), and effectively educating SWDs (Madaus & Shaw, 2004).

Appropriate postsecondary accommodations are evaluated and approved by each postsecondary institution. These accommodations must not alter the program that the institution has designed and approved. Accommodations are not modifications since modifications do aim to change the program in place. According to special education laws, such as the ADA (McCusker, 1995), reasonable accommodations must be determined as both necessary and

reasonable, without posing a direct threat to the health and safety of others or result in a substantial change in an essential element of the curriculum.

Accommodations must not change which service is provided to an SWD. Shaller (1991) stated how reasonable accommodation requirements have been interpreted. In addition, Shaller (1991) analyzed the parameters of the duty to afford reasonable accommodation under the ADA. Before postsecondary accommodations are approved, there must be proof that they do not create an undue financial or administrative burden for the institution (Shaller, 1991).

Equal access to higher education for postsecondary SWDs has been a national concern for half a century. However, since legislation has been amended throughout each decade to reflect this need, the challenge of providing equal educational opportunities and appropriate services in higher education to SWDs has escalated. To understand the relevance of serving postsecondary SWDs, their history in higher education requires textual examination.

The Increase of Enrollment of Postsecondary SWDs

Legislation that has passed equal education rights for SWDs led to more enrollment in higher education, but it has also created the increased prevalence of dropouts among postsecondary SWDs. Despite the attention postsecondary disability status has garnered over the decades, it continues to be neglected as a political and social topic in higher education (Olkin, 2002).

Historically, adults with disabilities were absent, detained, institutionalized, or discouraged from attending higher education (Dang, 2010). The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Hermann, 1977) was amended with minimal national awareness, and consequently, it did not bring about much social change for postsecondary SWDs. Thus, SWDs did not attend college since there was minimal activism by individuals seeking greater access to colleges and

universities. Furthermore, few SWDs had the skills and preparation to attend college settings (Rothstein, 2009).

It was not until 1975, with the passing of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act that SWDs began completing high school programs and gained rights and access to higher education settings (Prince et al., 2013). Yet, upon graduating from high school, SWDs were less likely to pursue secondary education or live independently (Prince et al., 2013). Significant laws such as the Higher Education Opportunity Act Reauthorization (HEOA Reauthorization, 2008) aimed to eliminate the discrimination of postsecondary SWDs and provide much-needed services to postsecondary SWDs (Newman et al., 2019).

Departure and Dropout Statistics of SWDs

According to the National Center for Education statistics, 65.5% of students with disabilities graduated from high school (The ASHA Leader, 2018). Upon entering colleges and universities, 19% of undergraduates reported having a disability (NCES, 2020). The rate for SWDs who attended higher education was higher among those age 30 and older (23%) than among 15 to 23 year-olds (18%). This is because of SWDs taking time off between high school and a postsecondary program or not having a secure plan upon high school graduation (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2019).

The National Center of Educational Statistics revealed that of the 20.2 million students enrolling in colleges, 2.42 million (11.1%) of these students have a disability (NCES, 2020). According to the NCES (2020), 72% of all students with disabilities (U.S. nationally) have departed or dropped out of postsecondary academic settings (college and universities), including online and distance learning.

Current K-12 Special Education Legislation

Currently, K-12 schools are diligent in providing suitable training to all of their teachers, including nonspecial educators, which impacts the overall academic success of SWDs.

Throughout each decade, previous legislation has been passed to protect SWDs, such as Section 504 Rehabilitation Act, (Grant et al., 2004), the IDEA (Dragoo & Library of Congress, 2018), and the HEOA (Hegji et al. 2018). The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) protects postsecondary SWDs against discrimination, although it does not provide funding, and neither does it address the academic resources and services of postsecondary SWDs, specifically special education services, including accommodations (The IDEA, 2012).

Contrary to the ADA, the IDEA does provide limited federal funding for the education of children with disabilities ages 3–21, as well as expanding the protections and requires that states agree to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) that mandates Specially Designed Instruction be provided at no cost to the parents (Dragoo & Library of Congress, 2018). However, the IDEA is an underfunded mandate and compliance measures of adequate funding are still being disputed (Bolduc, 2012). The lack of compliance with this national mandate impacts the appropriate accommodations implemented K-12, and, consequently, affects postsecondary SWDs who pursue degrees.

Section 504 is civil rights statute rather than federal; it requires schools, public or private, who receive federal financial assistance for educational purposes, not discriminate against children with disabilities. Additionally, they must provide reasonable accommodations, yet they are not required to enforce this mandate (deBettencourt, 2002). Comparably, higher education institutions do not have to enforce similar mandates. Currently, both Section 504 and Title II protect school-age K-12 students from discrimination, yet this legislation does not carry over or

travel with the student to his or her higher education setting (U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2020).

In a Cawthon and Cole (2010) study, the researchers examined SWDs' perspectives on postsecondary accommodations and discovered that in making the transition between high school and college, SWDs must also make a shift between legislation that guides their eligibility and access to support services. Postsecondary SWDs will not get a 504 Plan, such as the one they had during high school, and consequently, the student holds a majority of the responsibility (West Chester University, 2018).

Postsecondary schools are not required to provide FAPE. Instead, postsecondary institutions are required to provide appropriate academic adjustments to ensure that the institution does not discriminate based on disability (U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2020). Even though the IDEA is solid legislation that protects K-12 SWDs, its protections are discontinued upon high school graduation, and in its place is the Summary of Performance (SOP) that is part of the student's transition plan. The SOP details the student's previous accommodations that the student will employ once they have successfully transitioned to a college or university. It is the student's responsibility to share their SOP with their college or university.

Enforcing appropriate and legal special education instruction for faculty in higher education is complex. Institutional management and administration must actively monitor and supervise faculty training to ensure legal compliance and the proper evaluation of teachers (Bays, 2001). In a K-12 setting, administrators must oversee special education instruction and monitor for effective implementation of the program. Furthermore, merely training teachers on effective classroom strategies is complex and does not guarantee the proper implementation of such

practices (Kincade et al., 2020). Currently, the evaluation of highly effective special education teachers includes the evaluation of their performance in addition to legal compliance, and implementation of direct, explicit instruction (Bays, 2001). These measures are heavily monitored, research-based, and evaluated routinely to ensure compliance with special education in every K-12 school district. However, in higher education, there are fewer national mandates, the prerogative of each institution regarding the implementation of program modifications, and evidence of less warranted legal compliance specifically about special education and SWDs (Bays, 2001). Consequently, this inconsistency is a result of fewer training programs in special education for faculty at every single university nationwide (Bays, 2001).

Problem Statement: SWDs and Faculty Connections

As a result of having limited or no experience or formal training in the area of special education and disabilities studies, higher education faculty struggle with implementing effective teaching strategies and providing appropriate accommodations for postsecondary SWDs (Schreifels, 2013; Sniatecki et al., 2015). One aspect that hinders SWDs' academic advancement is their ability to form a relationship with faculty and build much-needed rapport (DuPaul, Pinho, et al., 2017). Many SWDs require extra time for assignments, office hours, and curriculum exams; faculty members may be reluctant to follow through with this request and may feel pressure from term schedules, deadlines, and scheduling conflicts (West et al., 2016). Kraska (2003) found that professors in higher education were also concerned about the extra time and work involved with providing appropriate academic accommodations and adjustments.

Established factors for the success of SWDs include faculty knowledge, attitudes, and willingness to provide reasonable academic modifications and accommodations (Leyser et al., 2011). Shifrer et al. (2013) found that SWDs struggle with the completion of college course

work compared to nondisabled peers. During high school, SWDs are often able to graduate from their program with less course work completed than their nondisabled counterparts. Upon college entry, SWDs may not be academically prepared for the content delivered during the freshman year; therefore, professors will need to address this gap in their SWDs' prior academic learning (Shifrer et al., 2013).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to gain insight from faculty on the academic supports they provide to SWDs and determine the level of success for these interventions. Through the faculty's in-depth experiences, the researcher probed to obtain a deeper understanding of the accommodations for postsecondary SWDs. Furthermore, this case study determined the extent of institutional support, such as accessibility interaction, faculty relationships, and peer assistance, have been provided by the officers at this university. There was value in exploring the in-depth experiences of faculty members regarding their interaction with SWDs, their responsibilities as professors, and their knowledge of federal and institutional policies. Upon gaining this insight, the researcher analyzed themes that emerged from the accounts disclosed by faculty.

There were many aspects of this particular study that have influenced the researcher's purpose, including a greater understanding of why postsecondary SWDs are dropping out of colleges and universities (Huger, 2011). Moreover, the researcher intended to discover solutions to reduce the dropout rate of postsecondary SWDs. Upon the completion of the study, the researcher intends to form the appropriate training programs needed for college campuses (Lightfoot et al., 2018). Finally, the researcher aimed to give faculty a greater understanding of special education law and SDI for SWDs (West et al., 2016). The key objective of this study was to add to professional literature so that higher education faculty members and personnel of other

higher education institutions could improve the academic experience of postsecondary SWDs and advance the capacity of effectively teaching postsecondary SWDs.

Research Questions

- What are the academic supports that university faculty have provided to students with disabilities (SWDs) and were these interventions successful?
- What is the university model [policies and practices] for supporting students with disabilities SWDs?
- What do university faculty recommend to their institution and other universities for instructing students with disabilities (SWDs)?

Conceptual Framework

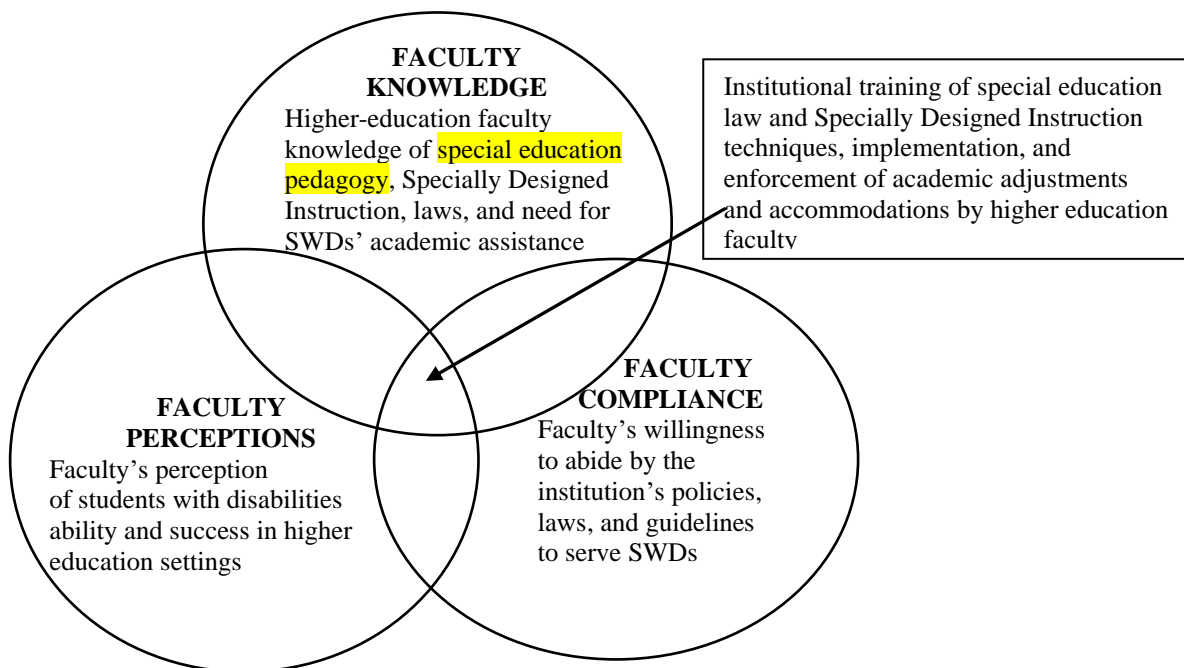
The conceptual framework, shown in Figure 1, was utilized to distinguish and draw conclusions between three significant areas where higher education need development associated with educating students with disabilities. These three areas are (a) faculty knowledge of special education pedagogy, particularly in understanding Specially Designed Instruction outlined by the IDEA (2004), (b) the perceptions that higher-education faculty have of their postsecondary SWDs, and (c) their willingness to comply with national policies and laws that address the needs of postsecondary SWDs (Murray et al., 2008; West et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2010). Currently, the IDEA is limited, thus, only serving SWDs during K-12. Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) as detailed in the IDEA, places a heavy emphasis on one-on-one instruction between SWDs and faculty. However, the IDEA (2004) currently does not apply to postsecondary SWDs to ensure that they receive their needed accommodations. Rather, this model illustrates the need for higher education institutions to enforce training for faculty in providing the proper academic adjustments for SWDs (Madaus et al., 2012).

This conceptual framework upholds that upon receiving institutional training in special education and adaptive pedagogy techniques, higher education faculty will demonstrate success

in acquiring faculty knowledge, embracing faculty compliance, and improving upon their perceptions of SWDs (Murray et al., 2008; West et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2010). Each faculty member's willingness to abide by the institution's policies and guidelines to serve the SWDs impacts the student's success (Gitlow, 2001). Finally, campus accessibility supports would benefit from the knowledge gained from the in-depth experiences of higher education faculty. The application of assistance, implementation, and enforcement of academic adjustments by the higher-education faculty is necessary for equal access to higher education for postsecondary SWDs (Sharma et al., 2008). Figure 1 displays the conceptual framework for this study. The Conceptual Framework highlights how special education training is necessary or higher education faculty.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework Guiding the Study



Explanation for the Definitions of Terms and Acronyms

The definitions of terms are specifically related to the subject matter of special education practices and legislation. As these terms may be uncommon, they may require further explanation for the reader to have full comprehension. These terms provide additional context and will provide the reader with greater clarity.

The term “students with disabilities” has been used in the title and throughout this document. The acronym SWD has been utilized in this proposal. It is noted by the researcher that the term, specifically disabilities, may have a negative connotation in acceptable social discussions and may not be politically correct. However, the term students with disabilities and the acronym SWDs are deemed appropriate, acknowledged by, and utilized in U.S. school districts. Exceptionality is also a term that is utilized as a more socially and politically acceptable term; however, this term has not been approved as acceptable to replace officially students with disabilities and is still heavily debated. Therefore, it is the researcher’s decision to proceed with the term students with disabilities and SWDs throughout this proposal.

In addition to providing current definitions, this resource contains definitions that have since changed in formal literature. For example, throughout this proposal, the terms Disability Services or Accessibility Services will be used synonymously, as its appropriate politically correct name has changed in recent times, even though past published literature reflects this shift (Pennington et al., 2014). Furthermore, readers may need additional clarification between terms such as Accommodation and Modification, which can be confusing since these terms are often incorrectly used interchangeably. This resource is necessary to accompany this document. It is expected that this resource serves its intended purpose.

Definitions of Special Education Terms and Acronyms

ADA: The ADA prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, State and local government, public accommodations, commercial facilities, transportation, and telecommunications. It also applies to the United States Congress.

Accessibility: When a person with a disability is afforded the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability in an equally integrated and equally effective manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use. It guarantees SWDs are provided with curriculum materials in necessary formats and technologies with appropriate features in a timely manner and at the same time as students without disabilities.

Accommodations: Changes that allow a person with a disability to participate fully in an activity. Examples may include extended time, different test format, and alterations to a classroom. The Case Study Committee (CSC) determines what accommodations are required and once an accommodation is on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), they are not optional. Accommodations are reviewed annually and will need to be modified on an annual basis. An *accommodation* changes how a student learns the material. A *modification* changes what a student is taught or expected to learn.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD): A disorder that causes children to struggle with paying attention, being extremely active, and acting impulsively.

Accessibility Services/Disability Services (DS): Provides coordination of support services and accommodations for all qualified SWDs. Through collaboration and support of the entire campus community, the Accessibility Services Office ensures that all individuals have access to

college life at its fullest. Services and accommodations are determined individually based on disability documentation.

Assistive technology: Any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a child with a disability.

Confidentiality: IDEA requires procedures to provide a FAPE for all children with disabilities and are safeguards prohibiting the disclosure of any personally identifiable information. Clear guidelines have been set forth for public schools when collecting, storing, releasing, or destroying personally identifiable information on students.

Culture: The shared assumptions of individuals participating in an organization, identified through stories, special language, norms, institutional ideology, and attitudes that emerge from the individual or organizational behavior, and organizational web bound by a structure.

FAPE: An educational right of children with disabilities guaranteed by the IDEA. FAPE is defined as an educational program that is individualized to a specific child, designed to meet that child's unique needs, provides access to the general curriculum, meets the grade-level standards established by the school system, and from which the child receives educational benefit.

Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act (HIPAA): HIPAA of 1996 is United States legislation that provides data privacy and security provisions for safeguarding medical information.

IDEA: The original legislation was written in 1975, guaranteeing SWDs a FAPE and the right to be educated with their nondisabled peers. Congress has reauthorized this federal law. The most recent revision occurred in 2004.

IEP: Education plan provided to all students with a disability that have been found eligible for special education services and it is a written plan that specifies the individual educational needs of the student and what special education and related services are necessary to meet the student's unique instructional needs.

Individualized Transition Plan: This plan starts at age 16 and includes a statement about transition out of public education. This plan consists of goals that address areas of postschool activities, postsecondary education, employment, community experiences, and daily living skills. The plan includes services needed to achieve these goals.

Intellectual Disabilities: A disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills; deficit in cognitive functioning prior to the acquisition of skills through learning. The intensity of the deficit is such that it interferes in a significant way with individual normal functioning as expressed in limitations in activities and restriction in participation (disabilities).

Least Restrictive Environment: The placement of a special needs student in a manner promoting the maximum possible interaction with the general school population. Placement options are offered on a continuum, including regular classroom with no support services, regular classroom with support services, designated instruction services, special day classes, and private special education programs.

Modification: An adjustment to an assignment or a test that changes the standard or what the test or assignment is supposed to measure.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB): Passed in 2001 to improve student achievement, reform educational programs ensure that all children have the fair, equal opportunity to obtain a high-quality education, and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards

Specific Learning Disability: A condition giving rise to difficulties in acquiring knowledge and skills to the level expected of those of the same age, especially when not associated with a physical handicap.

Special Education Advocates or IEP Advocates: These help parents write appropriate IEPs and attain special education services for their child with a disability from their public-school system.

Specially Designed Instruction (SDI): As detailed in IDEA legislation, includes structured collaboration and delineated roles for each teacher, and emphasis on one-on-one instruction between students and special education teachers.

Summary Of Performance (SOP): Documents a student's academic achievement and functional performance including recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting their postsecondary goals. It is provided to a child whose eligibility for special education services has terminated due to graduation from secondary school with a regular diploma, or due to exceeding the age eligibility for a free appropriate public education under State law (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (Kochhar-Bryant & Izzo, 2006).

Transition Services: These identify each student's long-range goals relative to postsecondary education (including their strengths, preferences, and interests) vocational education, integrated employment continuing adult education, adult services an independent living.

Universal Design of Learning (UDL): A set of principles for designing curriculum that provides all individuals with equal opportunities to learn. UDL is designed to serve all learners, regardless of ability, disability, age, gender, or cultural and linguistic background. UDL provides a blueprint for designing goals, methods, materials, and assessments to reach all students, including those with diverse needs.

Accommodations and Modifications

Higher education faculty members need to understand the difference between accommodations and modifications. Higher education faculty might express dismay when they are expected to deliver the accommodation of providing extra time or assistive technology (Center on Technology and Disability, 2013). The accommodation allows a student to complete the same assignment or test as other students, but with a change in the timing, formatting, setting, scheduling, response, and/or presentation. This accommodation does not alter in any significant way what the test or assignment measures. For example, a student who is blind must take a Braille version of a test. Another student might take a test alone in a quiet room (Center on Technology and Disability, 2013).

A modification is a measure that changes the outcome or changes the program specifications. For example, a modification could be requiring a K-12 student with an exceptionality to meet only half of the objectives in a unit of Science, but still being assessed fully and earning a standard grade (Zhang et al., 2010). Other examples of modifications include allowing a student to complete work on part of a standard or allowing a student to complete an alternate assignment that is more easily achievable than the original assignment. Evidence of proper program modifications exists more readily in K-12 settings as opposed to postsecondary settings.

Faculty and Training

Faculty members may encounter unfamiliar situations that may occur in direct conflict with their expectations of teaching higher education (Lombardi et al., 2013). According to Sniatecki et al. (2015), higher education faculty members have expressed having a lack of knowledge of instructing SWDs and being properly trained in teaching students with special needs.

K-12 educators are more well-versed in IDEA laws and have experience providing SDI per the FAPE mandate. As a result, they are better equipped to support SWDs (Debrand & Salzberg, 2005). Even though higher education faculty members have advanced knowledge in a specialty area, they may have limited experience teaching SWDs (Gitlow, 2001). Faculty must adjust their teaching methods and provide personal or social, academic support, career counseling, and instructional accommodations (Rao & Gartin, 2003).

Institutions

Higher education institutions accept SWDs into their programs of study; therefore, it is their duty to provide the necessary support to allow the student to succeed. Student learning outcomes reflect the quality of the institution (Eaton, 2008). It is the institution's responsibility to build academic programs that are genuinely accessible to all students, as well as having a fully informed faculty and staff on the issues of special education and SWDs (McCusker, 1995).

Since the passing of the ADA in 1990, college and university officials report that campus environments have changed as a result of an increased awareness of the rights to SWDs, both on the part of the student with an exceptionality and the school officials (McCusker, 1995). Even with these advances in legislation awareness, SWDs may still be viewed as disabled, which may lead to segregation from various campus departments (McCusker, 1995).

Many higher education institutions do not offer formal and explicit training in teaching SWDs to their faculty (Kurth et al., 2012). Currently, SWDs must rely on campus accessibility services to develop and execute strategies for academic and social accommodations (Huger, 2011). It would behoove higher education institutions to collaborate and unify campus efforts to assist and provide appropriate accommodations and services for SWDs.

This study sought to examine the role of faculty in greater depth. It offers reasons for greater collaboration and alliance between faculty and school officials. By enhancing the partnership between school officials and faculty, SWDs will have a greater chance of remaining in school and graduating.

Positionality

After the passing of NCLB in 2001 (Smith, 2005), the researcher had worked for 17 years in special education as both a behavior intervention aide and as a special education teacher in the public school system. It is because of her connection with K-12 schools that the researcher investigates the transition needs of SDI for SWDs to higher education. The researcher has ambitions of being a higher education faculty member, and, therefore, merges her skills learned from K-12 special education and experience implementing SDI for SWDs of all ages and applying them to higher education settings. Through research, a plan, and a pilot model, the researcher intends to implement special education training to ensure that these groups of higher education are successful and feel prepared to instruct *all* postsecondary students. This will result in higher faculty self-efficacy, increased positive attitudes about SWDs, and broaden the range of instructional practices in higher education settings. The researcher intends to train and support higher education faculty, SWDs, and officers of higher education institutions to make this goal come to fruition.

Through her research and investigation, the researcher discovered that there is a national need for extensive faculty training in special education. Ideally, she would gain federal approval for her concept for nationwide training specifically, a universal, standard, mandated higher education faculty training. This training would be part of education and pedagogy training for all higher education faculty. Finally, all the researcher's work is aimed at providing support to these officers as an ally and not intended as criticism or faulting of these faculty or officers.

Summary of the Chapter

This proposal highlights the need for higher education faculty members to gain knowledge of instructing SWDs and being properly trained as they move forward. Faculty must be informed of new instructional techniques, as well as improving and altering their long-term teaching methods. The literature reviewed subsequently explores special education legislation, best practices of K-12 educators and higher education faculty, family support of SWDs, higher education faculty relationships with SWDs, faculty perceptions of students with disabilities, and the involvement of higher education institutions.

Organization of the Study

This study began by stating the relevant background, the problem statement, research questions, and the purpose. Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework and relevant research regarding disability policy and faculty attitudes. Triangulation of research is evident. In Chapter 3, the Methodology on various qualitative ideologies is highlighted in comparison to the selected approach for this case study. Furthermore, the design of the research is formulated appropriately to show the research in context. Chapter 4 demonstrates the results generated by in-depth analysis. Finally, in Chapter 5, a discussion of the key findings, lessons learned, and recommendations are presented.

Chapter 2: Review of Relevant Literature

Overview of Chapter 2

This chapter offers an extensive overview connecting the educational history of SWDs and comparing legislation that had affected higher education. The chapter begins with a restatement of the research purpose. There are several themes established in academic literature on knowledge of teaching SWDs, implementing their appropriate accommodations, connecting with the offices of disability or accessibility, and accessing faculty supports (Sniatecki et al., 2015). After addressing the challenges with current legislation, this chapter highlights the current resources and accommodations in place for postsecondary SWDs. Furthermore, it examines faculty instructional practices and attitudes that impact their higher education pedagogy. The following sections focus on the current structure of higher education and are centered around higher education institutional policies and organizational change. The subsequent section addresses the gaps in the current literature. Finally, the theoretical framework connects the themes that were addressed throughout the study. Limitations and assumptions ensue.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to discover and understand the in-depth experiences of higher education faculty of teaching SWDs. Additionally, the researcher aimed to find to what extent faculty created meaningful lessons and how they utilized effective instructional strategies for teaching postsecondary SWDs. Moreover, the researcher sought to determine what components fostered positive relationships among SWDs and faculty members and what were the most salient needs and recommendations for instructing SWDs.

The History of Higher Education Legislation for SWDs

The Rehabilitation Act mandates federal protection against discrimination of people with disabilities from any program that receives federal funds, including school boards. The ADA strengthens the Rehabilitation Act with broader protections against discrimination of people with disabilities, but is loosely defined (Madaus & Shaw, 2004). NCLB aims to provide all students K-12 with highly qualified teachers (Tran, 2009). The IDEA defines the rights of students and the responsibilities of schools and districts. As formally written in the HEOA, institutions and faculty will teach and meet the academic needs of postsecondary SWDs.

The Rehabilitation Act

The Rehabilitation Act mandates federal protection against discrimination of people with disabilities from any program that receives federal funds, including school boards. Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rao, 2004) ensured that people with disabilities, but not specifically students, who had previously been denied access would receive legislative support. However, Section 504 is outcome neutral, with no specific academic plan to ensure each student with exceptionalities success and graduation (Madaus & Shaw, 2004).

ADA

Originally, Congress passed the ADA, and therefore, everyone gained equal access and opportunity unhindered by prejudice (Lefebvre, 2003). The implementation of the ADA mandated that all institutions of higher education provide full accommodation services to students with disabilities, regardless of whether the program received federal funding (Rao, 2004). Furthermore, the ADA extended its protection of people with disabilities in the areas of employment, activities of state and local governments, transportations, and telecommunications (Rao, 2004).

As nearly every postsecondary institution receives federal funds, they must comply with section 504 (Hawke, 2004). Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination based upon disability, including higher education (U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2020). Moreover, it is an antidiscrimination, civil rights statute that requires the needs of students with disabilities to be met as adequately as the needs of the nondisabled student. According to Grant et al. (2004), the definition of a learning disability (LD) is a discrepancy between intellectual ability and school achievement, and it was confirmed that persons identified with LD are covered under the ADA (Grant et al., 2004).

Section 504 covers postsecondary SWDs and defines disability more broadly than the IDEA. Consequently, this law may not protect postsecondary SWDs; students who do not meet the acceptable coverage requirements may still be eligible to receive accommodations under Section 504. For example, a student with Asperger's disorder would typically be defined as having a disability, but not meet the specific eligibility criteria for the category of autism under Section 504. As a result, even though SWDs with autism are guaranteed rights for coverage of a disability, they may not receive the same and necessary services and accommodations in higher education (Adreon & Durocher, 2007).

Under the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, all qualified SWDs (as defined under the law) are eligible for reasonable accommodations in the academic environment that enables the qualified individual to enjoy equal access to the college's programs, services, or activities. The college is not required to provide any aid or service that would result in a fundamental alteration to the nature of the program (North Central Missouri College, 2019). These laws protect SWDs in general terms, yet they did not specifically address specific accommodations and modifications to instruction by higher education faculty.

The IDEA

The IDEA was enacted in 1975, and was amended in 2004, detailing the needs for SWDs be taught in (a) a least restrictive environment or mainstreamed with nondisabled peers, (b) receive a FAPE, and (c) be provided funding and related services to their disability, along with other specific measures (Smith, 2005). These measures include SDI, with an emphasis on one-on-one instruction between students and special education teachers (DeMartino & Specht, 2018). During K-12 school, a student with an exceptionality is given an IEP specifying goals and objectives for learning and behavior, and school personnel are held accountable for documenting the student's progress toward mastering these goals. Furthermore, the IEP contains specified exceptionality categories for which students must meet certain criteria to be considered eligible to receive services (Adreon & Durocher, 2007).

The reauthorization of IDEA in 2004 resolved the complaints made by teachers and staff regarding the copious amounts of paperwork for IEPs and the numerous meetings that they were expected to attend (Smith, 2005). IDEA mandated accommodations and solidified SDI for all SWDs Pre-K-12 (DeMartino & Specht, 2018). However, students with disabilities who transition to postsecondary settings are posed with the issue of having to request accommodations every time they need an accommodation. Under IDEA, assistive technology can be used as an accommodation for students with disabilities (Zhang et al., 2010). There are many assistive technology products available to help K-12 SWDs. Yet, requesting accommodations in higher education has proved more difficult than in K-12 settings (Zhang et al., 2010). Any accommodation or modification an IEP team chooses must be based on the individual needs of the student, as demonstrated in Table 1, including program modifications and accommodations should be discussed by the IEP team.

Services must be requested through the accessibility office. Often, SWDs must request specific in-class accommodations from professors, such as preferential seating or the ability to submit a draft prior to their final grade (DuPaul, Dahlstrom-Hakki et al., 2017). Yet, since each college and university's policies vary, if the request poses a hardship to the university, the request may be denied (Madaus et al., 2012).

Table 1

Comparison List of Best Practices and Mandated Accommodations for Pre-K-12 Students With Disabilities (Baker, 2019) to Standard Academic Adjustments for Postsecondary Students With Disabilities (Baker, 2020)

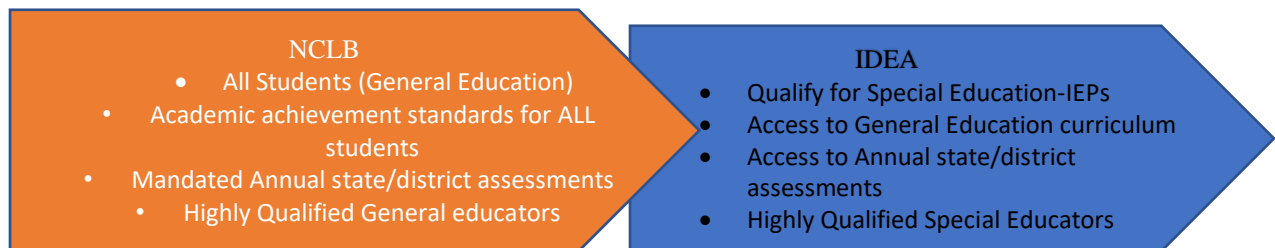
List of Best Practices and Mandated Accommodations for Pre-K-12 Students With Disabilities:	List of Standard Academic Adjustments for Postsecondary Students With Disabilities:
Preferential seating Scaffolding (support) Chunking/breaking down activities Tasks into smaller parts Differentiation of instruction Small group instruction Adapted curriculum counseling Extra time to complete tasks Repetition Graphic organizers Drafts prior to grade Visuals Hands-on activities Increased creativity Prompting/cues/pointing Visual cues Modeling Redirection Pair activities/peer assistance Noise buffers Directions read aloud in a different way Models of expectations Specialized materials Modified testing Life skills development procedures Speech to text (Read aloud) Schedule expectations described prior to task Assistive technology Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHH) (Baker, 2019).	Preferential seating (Student Request/Professor option) Peer assistance/note taking (Student Request/Professor option) Chunking/breaking down activities (Student Request/Professor option) Differentiation of instruction (Student Request/Professor option) Extra time to complete tasks (Student Request/Professor option) Repetition (Student request/Professor option) Graphic organizers (Student request/Professor option) Drafts prior to grade (Student Request/Professor option) Visuals (Student Request/Professor option) Models of expectations (Student Request/Professor option) Copies of Prof. printed Power Points (Student Request/Professor option) expectations described prior to task (Student Request/Professor option) Different testing room with proctor (Campus Accessibility Services) Assistive technology/ (Campus Accessibility Services) Deaf/Hard Hearing Services (DHH) (Campus Accessibility Services) (Baker, T.T., 2020)
K-12 Best Practices/Accommodations Missing From Postsecondary Institutions	
Scaffolding Tasks into Smaller parts Counseling Increased creativity Visual cues Picture Exchange Communication (PECs-students with Autism) Modeling/Redirection Specialized Materials Pair activities (OT,PT/SP) Modified testing OTHERS BASED ON STUDENT NEED	Small group instruction Adapted curriculum Hands-on activities Prompting/cues/pointing life skills development schedule Speech-to-Text -Read aloud Related Services

NCLB

In 2001, NCLB was passed into law requiring that every child should receive an education, including those with special needs (Smith, 2005). NCLB is far more specific with educational expectations by holding K-12 school districts accountable for their students' (all students including SWDs) academic progress. NCLB deals directly with testing and measures the adequate yearly progress K-12. IDEA (Prince et al., 2014) ensures that K-12 SWDs receive appropriate tests outlining the details in Section K: Participation in State and District-wide Assessments (Welligent, 2020). NCLB also promotes K-12 school choice, teacher quality, and paraeducator quality, which included the quality of credentialed education specialists (Ralabate & Foley, 2019). Figure 2 demonstrates how No Child Left Behind overlaps with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Figure 2

Representation of NCLB That Overlaps With the IDEA



In addition to NCLB, it is explicitly written in the reauthorization of IDEA that all K-12 teachers would be required to be trained to be highly qualified, particularly special education teachers (Smith, 2005). However, this strict national mandate does not pertain to higher education faculty. Moreover, it is implied that their level of degree makes higher education faculty highly qualified, and therefore, they bypass special education training.

Higher Education Opportunity Act

In 2008, the Higher Education Opportunity Act was enacted with the purpose of providing postsecondary SWDs the legislative rights and protection they deserved (Newman et al., 2019). The terms of the 2008 reauthorization of the HEOA (Hegji et al. 2018) include specific definitions of postsecondary programs for students with intellectual disabilities and the components of the degree they would receive at postsecondary institutions (Lee, 2009). In addition, the HEOA mandates 24 topics that include simplifying the federal aid application, campus safety plans, and rules regarding relationships between higher education institutions and student lenders (Lee, 2009).

Currently, universities face challenges with providing services and accommodations that involve specialized knowledge (Augustine, 2010). Although HEOA mentions the necessary transition of SWDs, there is nothing explicitly written to address postsecondary accommodations, academic program adjustments, or disability services provided (Madaus et al., 2012). Disability-related litigation is a trending concern for institutions of higher education (Stevens et al., 2018).

Title VII of the HEOA Reauthorization sought to provide technical assistance or professional development for faculty, staff, and administrators in institutions of higher education to support SWDs with quality postsecondary education (The Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008, 2007-2008). This law states that faculty in higher education will employ innovative, effective, and efficient teaching methods and strategies; institutions will provide postsecondary faculty, staff, and administrators with the skills and supports necessary to teach and meet the academic needs of students with disabilities, in order to improve the retention of such students

in, and the completion by such students of, postsecondary education (HEOA Reauthorization, 2008).

As national legislation for postsecondary SWDs has improved throughout the decades, enrollment has increased in colleges and universities, yet with these triumphs, complications have developed. Faculty members may refrain from providing the necessary assessment accommodations and academic adjustments, regardless of the SWDs' requests (Madaus, 2012). Higher education laws, such as the HEOA Reauthorization (2008), addresses postsecondary accommodations, academic program adjustments, and teacher training in Section D (Madaus, 2012). However, there is remarkable evidence demonstrating the lack of faculty knowledge in the area of special education and HEOA, effective teaching strategies, and their implementation of appropriate testing accommodations (West et al., 2016). Furthermore, higher education institutions are under no mandate to honor a student with an exceptionality's specific request.

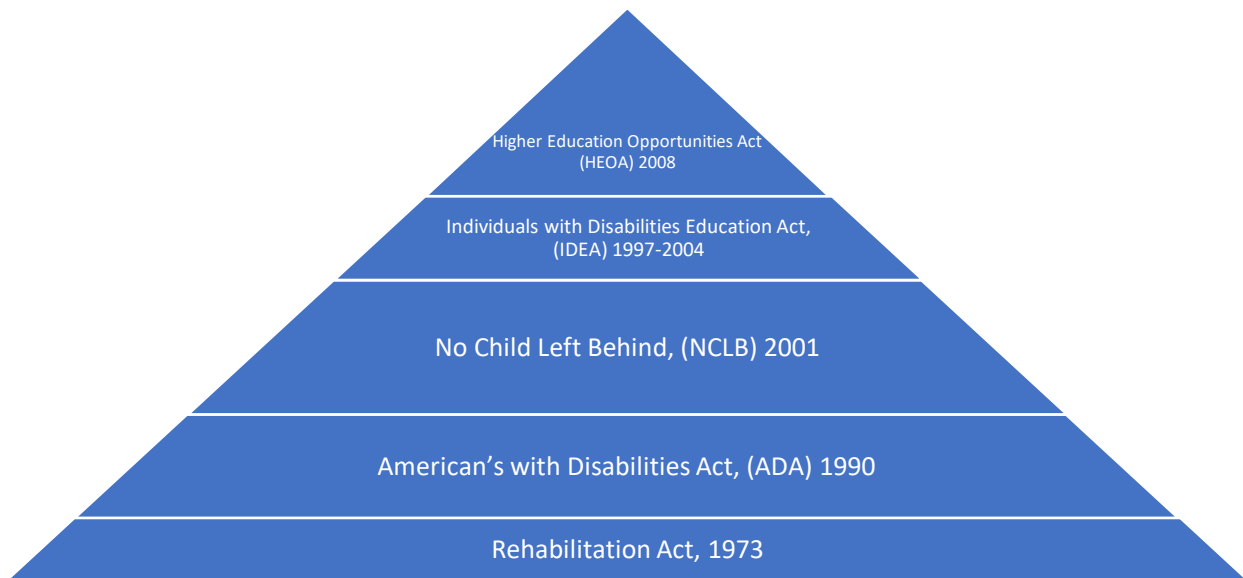
Although it has been more than a decade since the HEOA Reauthorization (2008) was written and enacted, there is still evidence that not all higher education faculty are trained properly, not all resources are being provided to postsecondary SWDs, and not all student accommodations are being met (Mazurek & Shoemaker, 1997). This evidence strengthens the need to capture faculty's experiences to gain insight about appropriate accommodations and policies in higher education institutions.

The current federal legislation lacks sufficient transitional support to students with disabilities to higher education settings, which directly affects their departure (Kurtz, 2011). Based on the HEOA, Title VII, colleges and universities should acknowledge SWDs who provide valid documentation and provide reasonable academic and classroom accommodations

to them upon request (Kraska, 2003). National special education laws were not enacted until the 21st century, and proper enforcement of these written acts may take longer upon evaluation.

Figure 3

U.S. Special Education Legislation Framework



Note. This figure illustrates the main components of each special education law.

Higher education faculty may be uneducated in higher education laws and policies that pertain to SWDs (West et al., 2016). Since much recent special education law reflects the need for instructional accommodations in all educational settings, it would be beneficial for faculty to have an understanding of these laws.

It has been noted that there are positive interventions and creative strategies for postsecondary SWDs used by faculty. However, higher education faculty members are faced with the tasks of providing appropriate accommodations and adjustments, accepting any inconveniences to the current academic program, and complying with the policies of the institutions, as well as the national laws that allow postsecondary SWDs equal access to higher

education programs (Office of Civil Rights, 2002). There is evidence that increasing faculty awareness of special education laws may help both faculty and students (Rao & Gartin, 2003).

Postsecondary Students With Disabilities

Transition Planning

In a Hadley and Satterfield (2013) study, findings indicated that SWDs had difficulty transitioning to postsecondary settings, including experiencing academic expectations and expecting the same support and accommodations. Secondary-level SWDs may be diverted from academic tracks and geared toward vocational and community college settings, which ultimately limit their higher education options. Transitioning to higher education settings was addressed by researchers, who discussed ways to enhance academic and social competencies of SWDs, particularly the academic adjustments at the postsecondary level (Beale, 2005; Cowan, 2006).

School district employees may write erroneous statements on IEPs, transition plans, SOPs, and other transition materials without the SWDs knowledge. One of the most noted oversights of special education law is made by school district personnel, specifically special education administrators and IEP team members, when developing students' IEPs. Thus, it has proved difficult for them to write accurate and educationally appropriate IEPs that meet the transition services requirements of IDEA (Petcu et al., 2014).

Family Support

In their K-12 educational experience until secondary graduation, students with disabilities have often had support from family, academic accommodations that were known in advance among school faculty and administration, and the benefit of all faculty members having undergone official training specifically tailored for SWDs provided by the school district. However, when SWDs graduate high school and enter a postsecondary university or college

setting, all of these supports, including academic accommodations are discontinued. This poses a problem since SWDs have often relied on parents and family to communicate effectively the student's needs with school administration and faculty (Jorgensen et al., 2018).

To gain access to accommodations and services at colleges and universities, SWDs must provide specific documentation of their disabilities, which are their previous evaluations and their previous and current IEPs. The conundrum is that high schools are not mandated to provide an SWD's documentation to a future postsecondary institution, and consequently, the SWDs is caught between regulations of one agency versus the requirements of another (Lindstrom & Lindstrom, 2011). In addition to the general admission requirements of a university, SWDs' responsibilities include preparing and submitting to their perspective accessibility services on campus (Shaw et al., 2010). Often, they must execute these university registration requirements independently. Halpern et al. (1995) found that SWDs demonstrated more in academics and transition success as a result of reduced parent-assistance, engagement in transition planning, and involvement in their own future planning. However, this is not the norm.

Parental Income

Apart from merely the disability status, some SWDs have had more available resources and financial support. Artiles (2019) found that SWDs from affluent neighborhoods benefitted from social ties and interactions, collective efficacy, institutional resources, and routine activities, whereas SWDs who did not receive these measures demonstrated detrimental outcomes. In Newman and Madaus (2015), researchers found that SWDs from families of higher income were more prevalent than SWDs of families with less income (Newman & Madaus, 2015). Moreover, English was the primary language of 91% of SWDs who attended postsecondary school.

High schools with students who are considered low socioeconomic status established patterns of departure, rather than preparing them for success. McFarland et al. (2019) found that the graduation rate for high school SWDs in 2017 was 17%. These students' success was attributed to interventions such as ongoing parental support, teacher contact, explicit instructional techniques, academic assistance, and access to appropriate resources. These measures that proved successful during high school should be implemented during the transition stage for postsecondary SWDs to ensure their continued academic success.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

As privacy acts, particularly the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, have been put in place, this act supersedes any parent authority for their child with a disability, even if the parental action is to assist for a positive outcome (Tonsager & Skeath, 2017). Once the student with an exceptionality enters college, they are by law, expected to assume their educational rights.

HIPAA

The HIPAA enacted laws regarding individual protected health information. This law is defined as individually "identifiable health information that is transmitted by or maintained in electronic media or any other medium, with the exception of educational or employment records" (Wilkinson & Reinhardt, 2015, p. 407). Often institutions recommend that parents be involved in their son's or daughter's academic programs, much like partners. However, the conflicting viewpoint is that the student with exceptionality is a responsible adult who can manage and disclose student health and treatment records and university processes, including covered entities, such as campus counseling centers and private physicians, along with others (Wilkinson & Reinhardt, 2015).

SWDs must be knowledgeable about HIPAA rights and protocols. HIPAA protects SWDs, but the student must be mindful of self-disclosing to the campus accessibility services department (Dickstein & Christensen, 2008). SWDs should meet with their professors during private hours each semester to ensure that the student with an exceptionality knows the expectations of the class and assignments per the syllabus and discuss final assignments and accommodations (Dickstein & Christensen, 2008). It is recommended that the student with an exceptionality self-disclose their disability to each of their professors at the beginning of the semester. Even though the Office of Student Accessibility may send a formal letter to the professor, usually in e-mail, it is recommended that SWDs meet and discuss their accommodations.

Transition to Postsecondary Higher Education Settings

Once a student with an exceptionality graduates from high school and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and HIPAA laws take effect, postsecondary SWDs may lack independence during the transition to college and during their freshman year (DuPaul, Pinho, et al., 2017). As a result, SWDs may have difficulty executing simple procedures during the transition process to higher education, such as self-disclosing their disability, requesting accommodations from a faculty member, and having the opportunity to engage actively in their own future planning (DuPaul, Pinho, et al., 2017). This includes creating their own schedules, choosing a major, and selecting a housing plan and roommate. According to Cheong and Yahya (2013), transitional needs of SWDs encompass self-advocacy skills training, career guidance, assistance from trained transition personnel, and transition services. All of these components influence the academic success of SWDs.

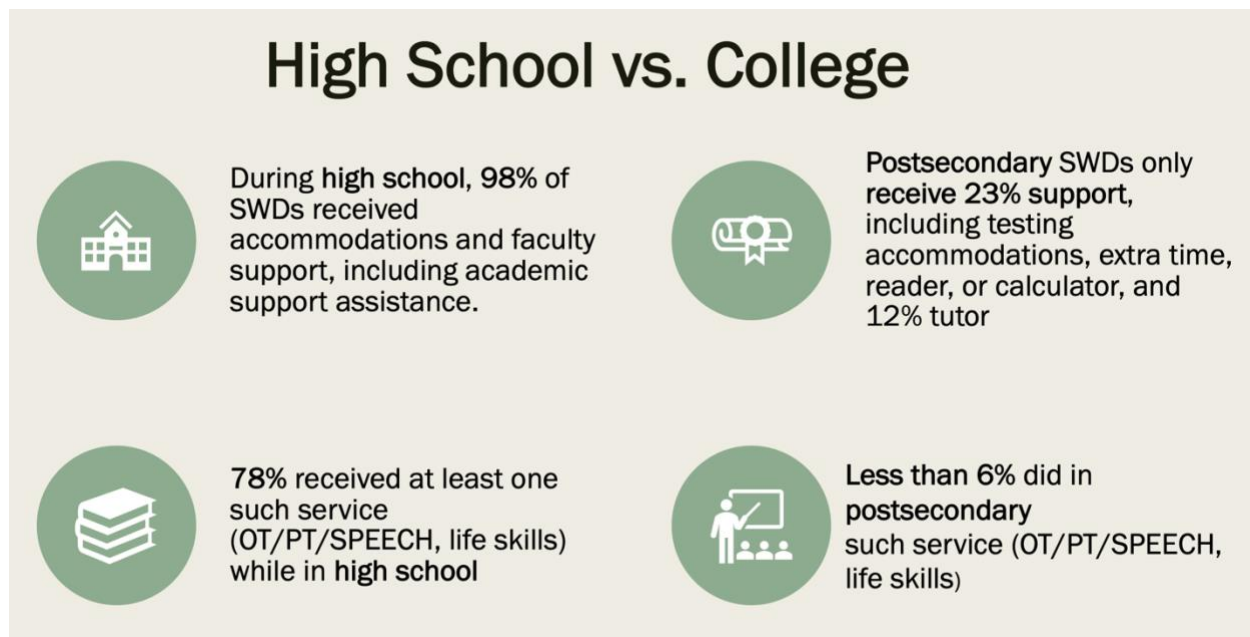
Postsecondary students with ADHD struggle with successful transitioning to higher education; as a result, they may require training and additional orientation sessions upon entry to their universities (Lefler et al., 2016). For many students with disabilities, the transition to college is compounded by barriers to college preparation programs, SAT preparation, and critical transition services, (DuPaul, Pinho, et al., 2017). Among SWDs, 86% experience barriers in their postsecondary education (Cawthon & Cole, 2010). Furthermore, SWDs often hesitate to request accommodations (Kraska, 2003).

Figure 4 shows how programs or individualized services decreased significantly from the secondary to the postsecondary school level. During high school, 98% of SWDs received accommodations and faculty support, including academic support assistance. However postsecondary SWDs only receive 23% support, including testing accommodations, extra time, reader, or calculator, and 12% of academic assistance of a tutor (Newman & Madaus, 2015).

Of postsecondary SWDs, 78% received at least one such service while in high school, whereas less than 6% did in postsecondary school, including services such as case management, mental health/behavior management, occupational therapy or life skills training, social work services, and transportation services (Newman & Madaus, 2015).

Figure 4

High School Versus College Framework



Note. This figure illustrates a comparison of the accommodations received by SWDs during K-12 settings and accommodations received in postsecondary settings.

Since postsecondary SWDs face obstacles upon entry to their postsecondary settings, it is necessary that universities consider creating supportive mentoring and training programs.

Postsecondary students with ADHD are more successful in their academic programs upon completing transition training to higher education (Lefler et al., 2016).

According to Newman et al. (2016), SWDs who actively registered for accessibility services and self-disclosed their disabilities, reported higher GPAs and having a greater overall experience. Moreover, SWDs developed further academic success in their program by meeting regularly with faculty and communicating their needs for their academic adjustments, modified assignments, and accommodations for their exams (Newman et al., 2016).

Megivern et al. (2003) study found that the lack of faculty support and trust contributed to SWDs' inability to complete their college programs. Specifically, SWDs experienced adverse

effects such as feelings of stigmatization, low self-esteem, problems with trust, and difficulties with attention and concentration. University faculty should connect with their SWDs, bond with them, and ascertain their students' levels of positive intent. The faculty-student relationship made a bigger difference in postsecondary SWDs' academic success (Darling-Hammond, 2000; DuPaul, Pinho, et al., 2017; Newman et al., 2016).

Jorgensen et al. (2018) compared two groups of SWDs and found the group of students that had just LDs had more intent to graduate than the group with other disabilities. SWDs with an LD demonstrated proactive measures toward graduating, such as connecting with faculty mentors and advisors, choosing a major, enrolling, attending classes, advocating to professors and advisors, and actively registering for accessibility services (Jorgensen et al., 2018).

Most SWDs require more follow-up, self-help skills, and vocational training in addition to the services already being provided (Adreon & Durocher, 2007). Finally, Eichhorn (2016) reported that high schools do not prepare students with math learning disabilities with the math knowledge that they need to succeed in postsecondary mathematics courses. Higher education faculty expressed that teaching SWDs is challenging since SWDs don't come with prior content knowledge (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

Stigma

In addition to planning a smooth transition to a postsecondary setting, SWDs face more barriers, such as circumventing the stigma of having an exceptionality. In a Marshak et al. (2010) study, researchers found that postsecondary SWDs may seek to shed their identity of being a student with a disability, particularly to avoid being singled out by others in the school community. Students with a disability may succeed in concealing their disabilities and even

escape the negative effects of the stigma attached with their disability. Additionally, they may not even truly accept that they need assistance (Marshak et al., 2010).

Since many postsecondary SWDs yearn to avoid negative social reactions with peers, as well as negative interactions with faculty, they may be reluctant to self-disclose their disabilities (Marshak et al., 2010). In addition, they may fear criticism by SWDs who chose not to self-disclose and ultimately conceal their feelings of guilt about their abilities (Marshak et al., 2010). SWDs may not have the personal awareness and belief that they still require academic assistance. Moreover, SWDs may not know where to find the academic services on campus (Marshak et al., 2010).

SWDs reported having a positive relationship with faculty and did not indicate feelings of having a stigma (Green, 2018). However, by concealing their disabilities and proceeding with academic tasks, SWDs forfeit their ability to utilize accessibility services and receive their necessary academic accommodations. Concealing their disabilities could prove detrimental to the overall goal of achieving academic success and graduating from their programs.

Cawthon and Cole (2010) found that even when faculty reported having positive interactions with SWDs, the feeling may not be reciprocated. SWDs reported feeling a weak sense of belonging or that faculty believed them to be incompetent or should not be enrolled in school (Cawthon & Cole, 2010). Another complex issue that SWDs reported was that professors did not know how to instruct them properly, accommodate them, or were unwilling to provide specific accommodations (Cawthon & Cole, 2010).

Academic Success of Postsecondary SWDs

In a DuPaul, Dahlstrom-Hakki, et al. (2017) study, the academic progress of students with learning disabilities and ADHD was followed and it was found that of all of the students

with disabilities on campus who received academic support services, the GPAs of students with ADHD surpassed those with other types of learning disabilities. By strategically targeting each student's specific area of academic need, and providing explicit instruction, there is a significant probability that SWDs' academic goals, including a higher GPA, will be met (DuPaul, Dahlstrom-Hakki et al., 2017).

Weis et al. (2019) found that postsecondary students with ADHD demonstrated academic success to their programs with several accommodations, including structured or unlimited additional time on exams, separate testing rooms, modified exams, flexible grading, simplified directions, alternate exams, shortened length, and alternate format exams (e.g., no essay or recall tests; and access to notes). Furthermore, students with ADHD benefitted from having the ability to submit drafts of their assignments to their professors prior to the final grade (Weis et al., 2019). These measures have led to student retention.

Although accessibility services offer various services to SWDs, including tutoring and study skills training that are intended to support college persistence and graduation, it is still unknown whether these supports positively impact SWDs' academic performance (Chiu et al., 2019). An SWD's disability status is recognized by DS on a case-by-case basis.

To retain a greater number of postsecondary SWDs and reduce the escalating dropout rate, several measures have been identified. First, persistence and consistency of academic activity of SWDs and monitoring risk behaviors of SWDs is key. Next, it is instrumental to establish a mentorship or an adult connection with the school and reinforce a sense of belonging to the school through authentic participation in school-related activities. Finally, it has been proved advantageous to incorporate life skills and problem-solving skills into a program to assist SWDs in overcoming campus community challenges (Thurlow et al., 2002).

Supporting SWDs during online distance learning requires a great deal of instructional planning and preparation (Deschaine, 2018). SWDs raised concerns regarding program implementation, interventions, and accommodations. According to Kraska (2003), SWDs reported support services and accommodations such as peer support groups, tutors, mentors, understanding their disability, the learning disabilities staff, and attitudes of faculty members contributed greatly to their academic success. Positive student learning outcomes in online learning platforms were found to be student engagement and participation, and motivation and persistence (Rachal et al., 2007).

Students With Disabilities' Self-Efficacy

Upon entering postsecondary settings, SWDs face difficulties with their self-perception, identity, and self-efficacy that may influence their decisions related to college majors, persistence to degree completion, career choices, and relationship formation (Shattuck et al., 2014). SWDs may not know how their disabilities impact their decision-making process and their future plans (Mazurek & Shoemaker, 1997).

Self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) can impact the student's ability to self-advocate to postsecondary faculty. When compared to their nondisabled peers, SWDs, especially males, had lower self-efficacy, which resulted in low self-esteem, lack of work experience, and nonexistent transition plans. Ultimately, attending postsecondary schools without the support and faculty involvement exacerbated the SWDs lack of motivation and career exploration (Mazurek & Shoemaker, 1997). Students with disabilities who cultivated relationships with faculty and career services demonstrated higher self-efficacy and greater self-esteem.

Jenson et al. (2011) found that postsecondary SWDs who demonstrated high self-efficacy had close relationships with their instructors, classmates, family, and friends. As a result of

having a constant support and encouragement from a close family or friend, the SWD reported having greater self-efficacy.

Graduate Programs

According to Lester & Nusbaum (2017) Since postsecondary SWDs are dropping out of postsecondary programs, and not returning, there are less SWDs earning their Bachelors' degrees. As a result of not completing their undergraduate programs, they are unable to pursue graduate degrees. There is a high demand for a greater number of SWDs to enter graduate-level programs (Lester & Nusbaum, 2017). This will increase the prevalence of people with disabilities in the workforce (Petcu et al., 2014).

Faculty

Office of Student Accessibility

When an SWD enters a college setting, it is assumed by faculty that the student has done due diligence, and properly registered with the on-campus DS/Office of Accessibility Services. Throughout this proposal, DS or Student Accessibility Services (Definition of Terms) was used synonymously, as its appropriate politically correct name has changed in recent times, even though past published data reflects this error (Pennington et al., 2014).

In a Sniatecki et al. (2015) study, the researchers used an online survey to determine faculty attitudes and knowledge and discovered that faculty have positive attitudes toward students with physical disabilities, yet they had more negative attitudes toward students with mental health disabilities and learning disabilities. Furthermore, researchers of this study found that faculty endorsed a belief that the accessibility office provides psychological and educational testing, which is not the case.

In addition, faculty members were uncertain and had limited experience serving SWDs. Consequently, they required further knowledge and training to implement effective strategies reflective of the DS office on campus (Sniatecki et al., 2015). Finally, faculty members expressed disinterest in having to teach SWDs at all and stated genuine uncertainty when asked about the specific disability services provided to each SWD (Jones, 2015; Leyser et al., 2011; Sniatecki et al., 2015). Ultimately, faculty had been misinformed about the realities of services, but were willing to be trained and receive professional development when they were held accountable for delivering services and accommodations.

Often SWDs hesitate to contact faculty regarding their disability and have a preference to contact the Student Accessibility Services office for academic assistance (Green, 2018). Furthermore, SWDs indicated Student Accessibility Services providers focused on the individual student rather than the disability, as opposed to faculty (Green, 2018).

Appropriate Accommodations and Faculty

To achieve academic success in postsecondary settings, such as two- and four-year universities and colleges, SWDs need appropriate accommodations. These accommodations are not only critical to maintain their academic status, but SWDs are deserving of these accommodations, as is their legal right (West et al., 2016). SWDs had to fight for the legal right to have accommodations on exams in postsecondary settings (West et al., 2016). Acquiring mandated legislation that supported SWDs' rights for these specific appropriate testing accommodations, such as extra time on exams, was no easy feat for disability activists (West et al., 2016). In addition, faculty members at 12 different institutions of higher education revealed through focus groups that Section 504 and the ADA were vague and unclear regarding the provision of reasonable accommodations (Zhang et al., 2010). Almost half had little or no

knowledge of legislation pertaining to postsecondary students with disabilities (Zhang et al., 2010).

Exam Accommodations Discrepancy

Comparable academic services and academic accommodations are deficient (Jones, 2015). Higher education faculty may express negative viewpoints regarding a SWD request to alter or modify a specific assignment (Baker et al., 2012; Lindstrom & Lindstrom, 2011). Faculty have expressed the view that to alter or modify an assignment is unfair to the other students who don't receive the accommodation (Kurth et al., 2012). In addition, they uphold that SWDs must complete the assignments the same way, with the same restraints as their nondisabled peers. Faculty members may still feel that all students must learn the same way (Kurth et al., 2012).

Green (2018) noted faculty focusing on the individual, normalizing disability, and supporting the use of academic adjustments during their interactions. Lombardi et al., (2011) discovered that faculty were willing to provide minor accommodations, such as preferential seating near the professor during classes, but hesitated when asked to provide major accommodations, such as modifying exams and allowing extra time for exams. West et al. (2016) noted a discrepancy between accommodations provided to SWDs in class settings, such as differentiation and scaffolding, as opposed to exam settings that provided a smaller test setting and extra time.

Legal Ramifications of Students With Disabilities

In higher education, it is evident that faculty are exceptionally knowledgeable in their fields of expertise; therefore, to require additional training in special education would seem redundant and may not occur. Zhang et al. (2010) found a significant correlation between faculty members' limited knowledge of special education laws and their willingness to provide

accommodations. According to Zhang et al., (2010), almost three fourths of more than 400 faculty members and administrators were unfamiliar with the requirements set forth under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the ADA of 1990. As a result of not becoming formally trained in special education law, faculty may face accountability standards, legal ramifications for institutional errors, and may receive insufficient resources and support for appropriate services for SWDs.

For more than a decade, distance learning has served students with disabilities, and allowed many SWDs access to higher education through technology. As a result, access to technology impacts their academic success in school. More than 700 lawsuits have been filed regarding website access for people with disabilities, yet only 15 of the suits have been academic websites, relating to web or technological accessibility, and more than 37 schools have been accused of noncompliance with disability law (Wang, 2017).

As is the case with many institutions, often they may be out of compliance with accessibility for SWDs until there is a formal complaint. Upon receiving a complaint, it follows that universities create a task force to address discrimination issues and handle any lawsuits against them (Anderson, 2014). For example, in 2012, the University of Montana reevaluated its accessibility requirements per request of the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights to ensure educational accessibility to all electronic and technology for people with disabilities at Anderson (2014). Institutions need to devise accessibility plans prior to grievances to avoid litigation.

In a New Jersey lawsuit, a student with a disability was denied equal access at the same time as nondisabled peers, to the course instructional materials, cocurricular materials, and online courses created or used by the professor. The court ruled that the school must be

accessible to individuals with disabilities at the same time they are available to any other student enrolled in that program (Carlson, 2020). In the state of California, random audits were performed and discrepancies were found, and consequently, several schools, which happened to be community colleges, had inadequate online accessibility for persons with disabilities (California State Auditor, 2015). These compliance issues need to be addressed.

Age and Experience of Faculty

The age of faculty members determines the level of support and the faculty member's willingness to do so (Vogel et al., 1999). Moreover, the age of a faculty member may determine the level of support they are willing to provide a SWD. Age and experience of faculty members contribute to the positive interaction and success of SWDs. Vogel et al. (1999) found that even though age was not statistically related to either disability knowledge or willingness to participate in training, other related factors, such as the academic discipline of the professor, experience teaching SWDs, years of teaching experience, and professional rank influenced the professor's decisions. However, newly trained faculty are better at adapting the curriculum for SWDs (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

In a Buchanan et al. (2010) study, researchers examined how a professor's age impacted an SWDs' ability to receive accommodations. It was discovered that more than 50% of faculty members were older than the age of 60 and reported to accept ADHD as a disability worthy of special instructional accommodations, whereas younger and middle-aged faculty attributed academic struggles of SWDs with ADHD to character, a lack of discipline, or a lack of motivation (Buchanan et al., 2010). Furthermore, senior-tenured faculty members, age 60 and older, held more conservative views. In contrast, younger faculty members, 40 and younger, were more open to developing new plans, altering lessons, making accommodations, honoring

academic adjustments, and were willing to make the sacrifices for SWDs with a positive manner (Buchanan et al., 2010).

Faculty Attitudes

Misconceptions about controversial topics, such as postsecondary SWDs are linked to negative attitudes; however, upon becoming informed, misconceptions are overcome, and positive attitudes emerge (Aguilar et al., 2019; Hill, 1996). Lombardi et al., (2011) found that faculty had positive perceptions about students with learning disabilities and were willing to spend time supporting students. Cawthon and Cole (2010) found evidence that faculty members considered themselves to have positive attitudes toward SWD and were willing to accommodate and advocate for SWD in their classes. However, faculty expressed uncertainty regarding qualification for implementing appropriate accommodations (Schreifels, 2013; Sniatecki et al., 2015).

In a Daly-Cano et al. (2015) study, faculty felt that if the student were admitted to a higher education setting, that the student must accept the academic responsibility, in spite of the new setting and previous learning accommodations. As a result, SWDs reported feeling that they had to obtain the skills necessary to achieve academic success for themselves, even though they relied on others, including faculty, to assist them in difficult situations (Sniatecki et al., 2015).

Making reasonable accommodations for SWDs was complicated by instructors' beliefs regarding the academic motivation of students in general (Daly-Cano et al., 2015). Thus, their comments tended to focus on the fairness of providing one student with a service or opportunity, but not another. Underlying these comments lay an assumption that students are, on the whole, looking for the easy way out of intellectual work. If this is true, then fairness refers to a system to control for cheating or academic slacking.

Faculty members may hold negative viewpoints about SWDs' success (Leyser et al., 2011). In a Black et al. (2014) study of faculty attitudes, faculty perceived that SWDs were entitled and taking advantage of the system. Additionally, professors resented that SWDs had not provided sufficient notice ahead of time regarding the need for accommodations. Other faculty noted that some accommodations can be perceived as unfair for what they considered a less severe diagnosis, such as a learning disability, while other faculty members noted that some students gain unfair advantages. Attitudes varied depending on prior experiences and familiarity. Faculty perceive that SWDs provide excuses rather than evidence, they are devious, suspicious, and seeking unfair advantages (Black et al., 2014; Jensen et al., 2004). Jones (2015) found that faculty members expressed disinterest and dislike in having to teach SWDs at all.

Willingness to provide accommodations varied based on the exact type of accommodation being provided to SWDs. Vogel et al. (1999) found there was a high level of willingness for recorded lectures, extra time, and exam placement relocated to the support services office. However, faculty members were least willing to provide supplementary materials such as an outline of their lecture or to provide assignments in an alternative format.

The literature reports a growing number of studies that have focused on attitudes and perspectives of faculty regarding SWDs and their willingness to provide requested accommodations. In a Leyser et al. (2011) study, researchers examined themes related to faculty attitudes toward teaching SWDs. Several SWDs reported that faculty held non-supportive attitudes and that students perceived that faculty lack sensitivity toward them as a result of having a disability. Some faculty members make it known to the student, to campus accessibility services, to other faculty members, and to university administration that they disapprove of SWDs enrolling in college and higher education (Leyser et al., 2011).

Higher education faculty members uphold the belief that the SWD is solely responsible for their academic success (Jensen et al., 2004; Leyser et al., 2011). However, there is concrete evidence to support that faculty are misinformed regarding SWDs' need for assistance, accommodations, and direct, explicit, academic instruction. SWDs must execute effective transition, complete timely registration processes, access the Accessibility Services unit on campus, and contact the appropriate faculty to be considered successful (Leyser et al., 2011).

SWDs felt that faculty were not aware of their academic needs and reported feeling a sense of intimidation and rejection. Furthermore, SWDs believed that faculty were skeptical and mistrusting of students with nonvisible disabilities, such as learning disabilities and ADHD (Leyser et al., 2011). In Kincade et al. (2020), altering teacher's perceptions of conflicting relationships with students posed a challenge. All of these perceptions among the SWDs and faculty contribute to students' decision to depart from their college programs. By addressing these concerns and providing appropriate faculty training, higher education institutions can begin establishing a change in faculty attitudes and perceptions.

According to Lightfoot et al. (2018), SWDs benefit from inclusive learning environments, access to accommodations, collaboration, and initiatives to alter negative attitudes and beliefs regarding students with LDs among peers and faculty. Ruppar et al. (2015) stated that expert teachers of students with severe disabilities are guided by their values and principles regarding inclusion, specifically dignity and value of students with severe disabilities. Faculty may have different beliefs about the type of disability. Gitlow (2001) investigated the attitudes of occupational therapy and occupational therapy assistant educators toward the inclusion of SWDs in their educational programs. Faculty attitudes toward inclusion of SWDs are different

depending on the nature of the disability. Sensitivity toward SWDs was a quality that more faculty need to possess (Gitlow, 2001).

Faculty attitudes regarding SWDs can influence the level of support the SWD receives and what accommodations are provided by the faculty member. Consequently, a faculty member's attitude toward an SWDs may impact the student with a disability's success in that specific course, and in their overall academic success in higher education (Hong & Himmel, 2009). According to Rao and Gartin (2003), a high percentage of faculty displayed a positive attitude about teaching SWDs and were willing to provide accommodations; however, they lacked knowledge of the law, particularly Section 504, and lacked the skills to implement the appropriate accommodations, which raised concerns at the institutional level. Increasing faculty knowledge was found to be the precondition for whether faculty would have a positive experience working with students with disabilities (Hong & Himmel, 2009).

Time Constraints

Time constraints and conflicts with university resources negatively impacted faculty perceptions of providing exam accommodations to SWDs (Murray et al., 2008). Furthermore, faculty members experienced detrimental effects from investing personal time to provide appropriate exam accommodations to SWDs, yet when confronted about this issue, they stated that not providing the appropriate accommodations is a result of insufficient knowledge and training (Murray et al., 2008).

Professors' reluctance to allow extra time included the misconceptions that this specific modification gave SWDs an unfair advantage and diminished academic standards (Hsiao et al., 2019). As a result, faculty felt unprepared to provide extra time because of time constraints with their schedules and deadlines with grades and other institutional restrictions. Furthermore,

faculty felt they had an increased workload without compensation, and lack of support from the university administration.

On the contrary, in a Hong and Himmel (2009) study, the researchers examined faculty perceptions of students with exceptionality and personal time constraint. In this study, the researchers received positive feedback. In fact, faculty did not perceive assisting SWDs as a time constraint or intrusion. Faculty may provide support to SWDs by altering their methods of delivery and assessment, and providing the necessary supports, such as meeting for office hours or providing one-to-one additional instruction (Mongiovi, 2012).

Supportive Attitudes of Faculty

Supportive attitudes were found toward SWDs in higher education. Several background variables such as contact, training, academic discipline, and rank were associated with attitudes and practices (Leyser et al., 2011). Moreover, 80% of faculty wanted to know what their responsibilities are toward SWD and many wanted to give additional time and help to SWDs (Cawthon & Cole, 2010). Faculty respondents also expressed strong interest in professional development opportunities related to SWDs (Sniatecki et al., 2015).

Relationships With Faculty

Many SWDs face the challenge of establishing positive faculty interaction (Sniatecki et al., 2015). Often SWDs exhibit stress as a consequence of having to address and interact with professors. Postsecondary SWDs report having strained, negative interactions with their university faculty, as a result of the faculty member's low interest and knowledge in teaching SWDs (Cook et al., 2009).

There are many factors for departure of SWDs, which include the inability to self-advocate to receive equal and appropriate accommodations, establishing a relationship and

related interactions with university professors, or a failure to communicate with university faculty (DuPaul, Pinho, et al., 2017). SWDs who established a relationship with their professors demonstrated far greater academic success and advancement in their particular higher education programs (Dupaul, Pinho, et al., 2017). The elements of academic integration and positive interactions with faculty would greatly enhance the overall academic success of SWDs, as faculty influence the amount of time spent in an academic program of study (DuPaul, Pinho, et al., 2017). Each SWD's disability status is recognized on a case-by-case basis.

Faculty Training

Murray et al. (2009) examined university faculty members' attitudes and perceptions and found support for the importance of disability-focused training by demonstrating that faculty who had received some form of training exhibited positive attitudes, as opposed to faculty who had not participated in prior training. Moreover, faculty members who have little or no experience or professional development in working with SWDs feel more competent as educators when teaching students with less challenging behaviors, specifically, LD and physical disabilities (Jones, 2015). However, faculty shared negative attitudes toward teaching when their students' behavior escalated or disrupted regular lessons, and students had more complicated needs. Consequently, faculty felt less equipped to accommodate them (Jones, 2015).

In a Buchanan et al. (2010) study, researchers recommended that more emphasis should be placed on disability-related education and training for faculty members during early stages of their careers. It should be noted that part of the orientation process for newly hired faculty at the institution surveyed involved attendance at a presentation by the office of SWDs that focused on SWD and the accommodation services available at the university.

Fox et al. (2011) determined that teachers who reflected on their instruction and practice were more effective as educators than those who did not engage in reflective activities. Kraska (2003) found that training programs may enhance faculty knowledge and sensitivity toward SWD. Moreover, faculty respondents expressed strong interest in professional development opportunities related to SWD (Sniatecki et al., 2015).

Faculty members who have undergone formal training in special education procedures and policies have SWDs who demonstrate greater academic success under their tutelage. Prior training in special education predicted willingness to use accommodations among faculty in a community college setting (Murray et al., 2009).

In a Hsiao et al. (2019) study, faculty participants identified a need for growth and development in special education topics, particularly knowledge about the types of disabilities, strategies for accommodating SWDs and applying inclusive instructional practices, access to resources, and the availability of campus support services. Upon completion of the training, participants indicated that the program adequately addressed those areas specifically in their knowledge of disability-related legislation, their knowledge of characteristics of students with various types of disability and reasonable accommodations for SWDs, their awareness of specific strategies and instructional methods, and their understanding of the perspectives of SWDs (Hsiao et al., 2019).

Training protocols vary depending on the institution, so consequently, some institutions are exceptional at creating and implementing proper training and professional development, while other institutions may have mediocre or inferior faculty training programs. Not all colleges have comprehensive training programs with valuable segments. In one study, 40% of faculty members expressed dissatisfaction and reported that the training was too short (hour long

training) and ineffective (Debrand & Salzberg, 2005). According to Leyser et al. (2011), faculty reported personal contact and extensive teaching experience with students with all types of disabilities—mainly those with learning disabilities, yet many had no training in the area of disabilities. A large majority reported both willingness and provision of classroom accommodations (Leyser et al., 2011). More technological than instructional and testing accommodations were noted (Leyser et al., 2011).

Expert Faculty

Expert teachers exhibit evidence of more knowledge of SWDs, advocacy skills, explicit instruction techniques of rigorous academic content, and scaffolding and differentiation to engage and increase access to the curriculum (Ruppar et al., 2015). Furthermore, expert teachers thrive on building a relationship with their students; they have the uncanny ability to be flexible, sensitive, and solidify a bond between them (Ruppar et al., 2015).

Implementing New Retention Strategies

Faculty are crucial to an SWD's success in a college program. Faculty members may demonstrate a lack of confidence when implementing new strategies and altering their academic programs for SWDs. Faculty members who displayed their knowledge of accessibility services and accommodations were more likely to use them during in their classes. For example, the use of alternate or parallel assignments, alternate instruction, peer tutors, and allowing students to demonstrate their knowledge in alternate forms are just some of the common accommodations employed by professors (Kurth et al., 2012).

Explicit Instructional Strategies Implemented by Faculty

Faculty members may have little knowledge of the characteristics and needs of SWD, especially in the area of LD (Kraska, 2003). In addition, many instructors lack the knowledge of

SDI for students with special needs. Moreover, faculty may need to learn the skills to incorporate differentiated teaching in their lessons and to use instructional technology to ensure equal access to electronic materials for SWD.

Faculty members may continue teaching using the same methods of instruction, without variation, with limited or no modifications, or alterations to their method of delivery. Faculty members may have had SWDs attend their classes, yet express doubt when asked to provide academic accommodations (Lombardi et al., 2013). In addition, faculty members often continue teaching using the same methods of instruction, with limited or no modifications, alterations to their method of content delivery, or without providing assessment accommodations and academic adjustments (West et al., 2016). Moreover, many higher education institutions do not offer formal and explicit training in teaching SWDs to their faculty (Kurth et al., 2012). Faculty are neither trained nor prepared to teach and support postsecondary SWDs utilizing appropriate accommodations and modifications (Griffin & Papay, 2017).

Kraska (2003) found in her study that initially, professors were enthusiastic and optimistic when they found out that they would be teaching SWDs; however, the majority of professors experienced dismay and concern about how to talk to the student. Furthermore, professors wondered if they would be able to teach the SWD effectively, and they were concerned about the impact of the SWD on the rest of the class.

In a K-12 study of inclusion classrooms with SWDs, faculty spent less class time instructing (Cooc, 2019). There is a negative implication to faculty spending less time instructing that has left a blemish for educators of SWDs. The percentage of SWDs in most inclusion classrooms in the United States is less than 10%, therefore, there are less SWDs in included classes (Cooc, 2019).

As a result of the low prevalence of SWDs in included class settings, most faculty do not teach SWDs, since they may not be enrolled in these professors' courses (Cooc, 2019).

Additionally, Cooc (2019) discovered that faculty of SWDs spend less time providing overall instruction as a result of providing more intense, explicit, and higher-quality instruction in a smaller amount of time (Cooc, 2019). Finally, Cooc (2019) validated that concerns of included classrooms were (a) instruction of SWDs takes away from the instruction time with nondisabled peers, (b) faculty need more training, and (c) faculty may require additional in-class support or assistance. To allow all SWDs to benefit from the quality of instruction, rather than total time instructing SWDs, colleges and universities should model explicit, intense instruction practices (Vannest et al., 2011).

Solutions for Teacher instruction

When university faculty are formally trained, styles of pedagogy must be revisited. Higher education faculty require a deeper understanding of learning and teaching than what was called for in the past (Darling-Hammond, 2000). As SWDs benefit from explicit instruction, teacher candidates need to be receptive to the experience of coteaching, and open to collaboration with teacher coworkers (Arndt & Liles, 2010). Collaboration among professional faculty members is necessary in today's schools, to create meaningful lessons and to design accessible instruction for all students (Arndt & Liles, 2010).

SWDs have indicated that faculty and administrators do not understand the issues they face in pursuing a college education (Cook et al., 2000). For example, Rumrill et al. (2002) reported that SWDs rated their former faculty advisors as having low to moderate knowledge regarding issues related to their disabilities. Teacher candidates must be mindful, open, and willing to collaborate with team members; therefore, development opportunities such as field

experience and sessions to practice coteaching skills are necessary in order to advance. Higher education faculty must demonstrate readiness to increase their knowledge of their program modifications and academic adjustments (Arndt & Liles, 2010). Higher education faculty members are uncertain about providing services and implementing effective teaching strategies to SWDs; however, they require training and professional development in this area (Sniatecki et al., 2015).

Institutional and Organizational Change

There is a need for social awareness that this paper confronts. According to Eaton (2008), the HEOA clarifies that higher education institutions are essential in setting standards and evaluating student achievement; therefore, the institutional quality is based on student learning outcomes. It becomes the institution's responsibility to ensure that its students, including SWDs, are receiving an appropriate education and achieving in the area of academics (Eaton, 2008)

Postsecondary SWDs have unique and diverse needs but are still viewed as disabled by institutions of higher education, as well as in society. College services and academic assistance for students with LD are more concealed on college campuses than they are in a high school setting (Schreifels, 2013). Students with LDs need to prepare in advance for assistance with problems that may arise. According to Schreifels (2013), faculty members who assist and provide appropriate accommodations to SWDs improve their opportunities to learn, as well as improve self-advocacy skills.

To foster a more diverse population in higher education, organizational changes, such as department and collaboration and colleague communication, must occur in respect to postsecondary SWDs. It is crucial for higher education institutions to recognize and address specific factors that impact their postsecondary SWDs' success and graduation rate, particularly

the awareness and supports of its faculty (Huger, 2011). Authentic organizational change cannot be implemented solely by the Accessibility Services, but rather, by the entire university (Huger, 2011). The organization of higher education institutions is segregated by department, which hinders the leaders' abilities to develop diversity (Huger, 2011). Consequently, since higher education departments are specialized, this detachment can be detrimental to students' learning and growth (Huger, 2011).

Accessibility Services

Postsecondary educational institutions that receive federal funds are mandated to provide SWDs with reasonable accommodations for academic activities (Chiu et al., 2019). These accommodations may include classroom accommodations, such as preferential seating close to the professor; exam accommodations, such as extended time and a smaller testing setting; and assistive technology, such as auxiliary aids and voice-to-text, a reader, or interpreter. Additionally, accommodations may extend to housing and transportation support services (Chiu et al., 2019).

To ensure that SWDs receive appropriate accommodations, colleges and universities often charge the accessibility services offices to monitor SWDs' academic accommodations, school-related activities, and academic supports throughout their programs. These institutional measures support the SWDs' learning, but also contribute to the development of collaborative institutional networks (Chiu et al., 2019).

Rights advocates for students with special needs, coupled with federal legislation affecting postsecondary institutions, have acted as the impetus for programming for SWDs on college campuses (Kraska, 2003). Colleges should provide full access not only to all physical areas of the campus but also to all academic programs and student activities as well (Kraska,

2003). Under the previous guidelines of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, only those programs receiving federal funding were affected (Kraska, 2003). Institutional guidelines and policies should reflect academic support, particularly from the faculty, to increase the retention of SWDs.

Higher Education Policies

Many higher education faculty members are ill-equipped for providing services. They may have chosen not to attend professional development for reasons associated with time constraint or convenience. Some faculty may be resistant to educational changes in higher education, or they may see change has too difficult (Debrand & Salzberg, 2005). Furthermore, they may not be willing to adhere to policies and laws that apply in their classroom settings where accommodations must be employed (Stevens et al., 2018). When faculty embrace new methods of instruction that are introduced as a campus-wide initiative, their acceptance of new classroom procedures may be inhibited by fear, dislike, and dismay.

In an examination of organizational leadership, Schmieder-Ramirez and Mallette (2007) found that acquiring knowledge of policies and procedures in systems, such as higher education institutions, are essential to our efficacy as leaders. Therefore, training in leadership may address some of the barriers to institutional policies. Understanding themselves as Authentic Leaders can positively affect classroom performance and strengthen their connections with students (Schmieder-Ramirez & Mallette, 2007). Faculty who immersed themselves in the culture of their university have a greater impact on others and have the capacity to leave a legacy (Schmieder-Ramirez & Mallette, 2007).

Even though some measures exist, such as postsecondary educational services, counseling, advocacy training, and checklists, these steps are minimal, as the need is greater than

the services that are currently being offered to SWDs (Adreon & Durocher, 2007). Other accommodations may be necessary for SWDs that might be beyond the scope of what universities typically provide and that may not be required under the ADA, which governs services at the postsecondary level (Adreon & Durocher, 2007).

The success of any college student, particularly in the academic realm, is to some degree determined by the type and quality of interactions that they have with their instructors (Cook et al., 2009). As those who provide academic instruction and help to determine campus climate, the priorities and behaviors of college faculty are important determinants of the quality of higher education experiences for students with disabilities (Cook et al., 2009).

Given the unique and diverse nature of this population in higher education, meeting the needs of SWDs requires professionals in higher education to be sensitive to the contribution of these students to diversity on campus along with students from more acknowledged diverse backgrounds (Trammell, 2009). This sensitivity is indeed important, as the most common institutional barrier cited by SWDs was lack of understanding and cooperation from faculty and administrators (Trammell, 2009).

Gaps in Literature

In the previous literature, the nature of services that a postsecondary SWD is entitled to under Section 504 and is offered in a postsecondary setting differs from the support services that they had received during high school (Leuchovius, 2003). Even if laws have been amended on paper, the implementation of the approved legislation is not evident. Therefore, although many SWDs enter college, there is no guarantee that they will have academic success in their studies, receive the appropriate and equal faculty advisement, or graduate in a timely manner (Trammell, 2009). The gap in the literature is the feasible program in higher education.

Theoretical Framework

This research was guided by the theoretical framework focused on Constructivism, the scientific theory that explains the nature of human knowledge (Piaget, 2003). The methodology of this study utilized a case study to focus on one issue or concern, specifically, to determine how higher education faculty employ academic supports for SWDs and how successful were their interventions (Piaget, 2003). This study aimed to conduct interviews of higher education faculty in one higher education setting.

The Constructivist Theory explains children's construction of knowledge from birth to adolescence (Piaget, 2003). The Constructivist Theory is useful for this study and for researchers in the field because it informs faculty how they can alter their teaching methods (Kamii & Ewing, 1996). Piaget believed scientists must study the Constructivist origin rather than examining only the end product therefore, studying children led to a more thorough understanding of human knowledge (Piaget, 2003). The constructivist approach allows for greater experiences of the learner, in this case, a SWD.

Constructivism provides a new perspective for educators by creating the lessons for SWDs and by reimagining education (Ackermann, 2001). A dilemma of Constructivism in higher education is that faculty are under time constraints, schedules, and rigorous deadlines (Piaget, 2003). In addition to faculty schedules and deadlines, Constructivism is geared toward younger, preschool-aged children. Therefore, for higher education, Knowles Andragogy theory could be applied.

Andragogy: Adult Learning

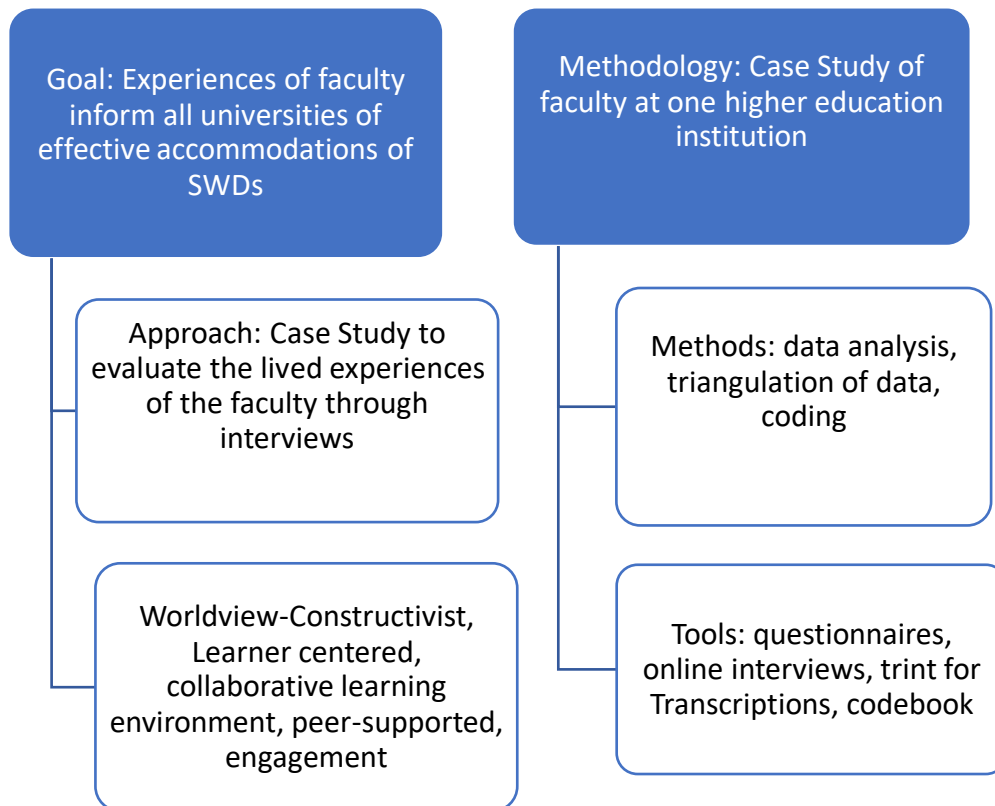
Since it is assumed that postsecondary SWDs are adult learners, Andragogy is the theory of adult learning and could be applied (Knowles et al., 2015). Andragogy addresses the 6

assumptions of adult learners: self-concept or strategies such as self-directed learning, adult learner experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, motivation to learn (Knowles, et al., 2015). Andragogy embraces the concept that SWDs want to learn for intrinsic reasons (Knowles et al., 2015). Furthermore, even though many SWDs are young adults, it is understood by the faculty that postsecondary education is a vehicle for proper transformation into adulthood.

For this study, both Constructivism (Piaget, 2003; Pass, 2004) and Andragogy (Knowles et al., 2015) may be applied as they each serve a purpose; developing creativity among faculty and allows for them to be inspired, while supporting the theory of adult learning and individual growth and advancement. The researcher's intent was to provide a foundation for advancing the knowledge and awareness of higher education faculty through increased reflection and connection with postsecondary SWDs (Piaget, 2003). Faculty can create new lesson models and incorporate new tools, media, and technologies to serve SWDs (Ackermann, 2001). Higher education faculty have the opportunity to develop their skills, employ new knowledge, and have greater self-confidence as professionals. The Theoretical Framework shown in Figure 5 highlights the goals, methodology, worldview, approach, and tools utilized in the study.

Figure 5

Theoretical Framework Influencing the Study



Note. Model of theoretical framework (Jago, 2019).

Goal Addressed

By understanding the current level of faculty knowledge of SWDs and the accommodations they receive, faculty are better prepared to instruct all of their postsecondary students. Faculty experiences with SWDs were analyzed and evaluated to inform other university faculty. The researcher interpreted previous academic research to compare with the experiences of this study and uncovered the level of current knowledge of teaching strategies by faculty (Green, 2018). In society, where college degrees often measure success, SWDs have the chance to demonstrate success in an equal manner as those without disabilities (Salvador-Carulla, et al., 2011). By training higher education faculty to be prepared for teaching SWDs, increasing faculty preparedness, knowledge, and ability, SWDs' academic program completion rates will rise.

Approach

The theoretical model was based on previous research explained in the literature review. For example, Lombardi et al., (2011) discovered that faculty were willing to provide minor accommodations; however, they hesitated when asked to provide major accommodations. In the literature review, the researcher gathered data from the NCES reflective of current dropout statistics. The researcher interviewed subjects through a qualitative case study, utilizing an interview guide (Appendix A). The interview guide had 10 significant questions related to previous teaching experience, knowledge of special education, styles of teaching, perception and attitudes, and plans for future training. All subjects complied with Institutional Review Board (IRB) restrictions prior to answering the questions. The researcher analyzed the collected data.

Worldview

Theorists, such as Vygotsky and Piaget, with a constructivist view are learner-centered and focus on having an active role for learners to receive information (Pass, 2004). Consequently, the role of faculty is as a facilitator who heightens the collaborative environment for SWDs (Ackermann, 2001). The constructivist viewpoint fosters enhancing other models of pedagogy and deviates from the standard lecture-style lessons (Pass, 2004).

Constructivist theorists, such as Piaget and Vygotsky, inform the researcher's approach to this study (Pass, 2004). Multiple observations from both constructivist-oriented classrooms illustrate connections between pedagogy and theory (Sharkins et al., 2017). Faculty's understanding, embracement, and incorporation of Piaget's and Vygotsky's theories may result in intentional teaching practices that support learner's construction of knowledge and development of autonomous thinking (Sharkins et al., 2017).

Methodology

A case study was used to realize the need for faculty development in higher education and how it has impacted SWDs. There were many factors such as social and political impact, the students' disability status, academic assistance, tutoring, and faculty awareness and knowledge of special education. These factors were correlated with each SWD's program of study, their GPA and academic success during each semester, and their graduation status.

Methods

The researcher utilized available data collected from an interview guide and from recorded interviews of 14 higher education faculty members. Specifically, the researcher utilized Zoom video conference to record interview sessions with faculty that occurred online after IRB approval and formal collection of signed release forms (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data collection, coding, and an analysis plan of pertinent data were detailed along with additional human subjects' considerations (Miles et al., 2020).

Tools

The researcher collected, analyzed, and included a sample of data collected from the interview questions and during the Zoom sessions that were analyzed. The researcher explored comparisons between data, via triangulation and Interrater. The tools utilized were a formal interview guide with relevant questions to the study, Zoom recordings, and Trint for accurate transcriptions.

Limitations

This research study was limited to one higher education Christian university in Southern California. Faculty with whom the researcher had not previously met or established a relationship were used in this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Sand University is a private

Christian university, as opposed to a public university, which would serve more students and have a wider range of diversity. Furthermore, the study was limited to tenured and early career faculty of higher education, who currently teach within this organization.

A qualitative method of research was chosen for this study, particularly through the use of interview questions, because it allowed for the researcher to ask a series of open-ended questions that examine the in-depth experiences of the participants. Participants might provide a wide range of responses that allowed for an adequate amount of data to be collected about faculty training in higher education institutions (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Assumptions

It was assumed that higher education faculty do not have sufficient training in special education and disability studies (Sniatecki et al., 2015). Another assumption was that higher education faculty are inexperienced with teaching postsecondary SWDs. These assumptions are supported by the research about faculty attitudes toward SWDs (Lombardi et al., 2011). These assumptions are based on previous research that linked evidence to the majority of college professors.

Currently, there are three entities (a) faculty, (b) institutional officials, and (c) SWDs contributing to the high prevalence of departure of SWDs from postsecondary programs. Through the evaluation of literature of special education legislation, faculty perspectives and attitudes, and institutional players and policy structure, researchers can better understand the position and begin finding solutions to reduce college departure of SWDs. Furthermore, all national higher education institutions can begin facilitating a course of action to change this bleak statistic.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter presents a discussion of the case study research design and procedures of the investigation. Following the problem and research questions provide the reader with the context of the study. Next, a discussion follows, addressing the suitability of the research design selected and the rationale for the methods employed. Upon explaining the rationale, details of the selection procedure, sampling, data collection, descriptive analysis, field issues, coding, and the protection of human subjects are explained. Following these sections, an analysis plan of pertinent data is detailed. Biases, validity, reliability ensued (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Following these steps in the process were the necessary components of validity, and triangulation. The ultimate goal of conducting this research was to gain valuable insight from the experiences of faculty of SWDs, explore effective accommodations employed by them, and determine how this information can positively influence other universities. Finally, the data analysis method concludes the chapter in this qualitative investigation (Miles et al., 2020).

The focus of the study was to discover the level of knowledge that higher education faculty have of disability law, adaptive instructional techniques, and experience utilizing campus supports based on the university model. To be more specific, the study answered questions such as:

- What are the academic supports that university faculty have provided to students with disabilities (SWDs) and were these interventions successful?
- What is the university model [policies and practices] for supporting students with disabilities SWDs?
- What do university faculty recommend to their institution and other universities for instructing students with disabilities (SWDs)?

These questions guided this investigative approach that led to uncovering what interventions faculty utilize during instruction and what knowledge higher education faculty have of adaptive instructional strategies. These questions reveal the level of institutional involvement in designing support for postsecondary SWDs and shows its success of current policies and programs for SWDs.

Research Design

A case study approach, which was selected by the researcher in comparison to other qualitative methods, is specific, complex, functioning thing (Stake, 1995). A case study makes it possible to understand the perspective of more than one faculty member yet focus on one issue or concern (Stake, 1995). In this study, one bounded case at a higher education university illustrated the issue of faculty's awareness of adaptive pedagogy (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Consequently, the research design focused on analyzing faculty responses and comparing them to determine the needs of the university.

A single case was selected based on a few determining factors. First, significant questions of the study required that higher education faculty share their personal experiences about teaching SWDs as data, answering clearly articulated what, how, and why questions. These questions were directly correlated with the research questions guiding the study. Next, a case study allowed the researcher to probe the specific experiences of faculty in a university setting. The faculty of the university was the unit of analysis for this study.

This study included elements of which the investigator has no control. These issues were contradictory findings that required refutation. Theoretical inference had been proposed as a means of combating the problem of local to global generalization, hence, one higher education institution as a case study (Lloyd-Jones, 2003). There were possible threats to validity in

experimental methods that test only a single theory (Lloyd-Jones, 2003). Omissions pose potential threats to validity similar to misinterpretations, treatment artifacts, or measurement error (Lloyd-Jones, 2003). Lastly, this case study approach involved triangulation of the data that was compared, specifically through faculty interviews, a sophisticated policy structure analysis, and collected online data of SWDs (Meijer et al., 2002).

There were concerns with a case study, such as applying the findings from just one case (for one specific university) to all systems (other universities). This approach was well-suited for the researcher's intention, to model a theoretical proposition to provide clarity to a prominent issue, specifically the experiences of faculty and how they have provided accommodations to SWDs (Miandehi,1997). The researcher developed an in-depth description of each of the faculty's experiences and utilized triangulation before establishing her final analysis. Analysis of the data was conducted by an interrater who allowed the researcher to validate the findings from the interviews of the faculty. Finally, the researcher discussed the findings, interpreted the meaning of the case, and shared the lessons learned (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Rationale

This case study approach was chosen to narrow the scope of the analysis and to adhere to a bounded case (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Furthermore, it enabled the researcher to examine the culture of the system (the university) and to determine the perceived motives that aligned with the behaviors that take place in an organization (Creswell & Poth 2018). Miandehi (1997) found that colleges and universities conceal how they function; therefore, qualitative methods are needed to discover these kinds of data. The authentic perception was straightforwardly explored with methods that involved open-ended interviews that evoked descriptions of events and allowed the interviewer to probe for further detail (Miandehi,1997). Qualitative methods foster a

change in people (higher education faculty) as a result of providing “clarity, insight, and changing their values, that will result in action” (Miles et al., 2020, p. 308).

Site Selection Criteria and Description of Setting

The site of the case study was a university campus in southern California. Currently, there are 393 full-time faculty at the chosen university, *Sand University*.¹ The researcher had chosen to conduct all interviews through the Zoom video conference platform for safety, time and convenience, and the ability to record faculty interviews. No interview sessions occurred on the campus or in person. This setting allowed the researcher to review each video repeatedly for thorough analysis. The researcher examined the institution and gathered accurate information in real-time (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data Collection and Procedures

The researcher “identified the specific case for the study as well as case sampling procedures” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 101). Since gaining a deep understanding of faculty knowledge and awareness of accommodations for SWDs is needed, this study was of unique interest (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It described a specific issue and concern, specifically understanding the current accommodations provided by higher education faculty (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher sought to provide an in-depth understanding of the most salient needs and recommendations for instructing SWDs. Consequently, it led to generalizations that may assist and act as solutions for other higher education institutions.

¹ To protect the identity of the institution and its faculty members, pseudonyms are used throughout this study.

Data Collection Strategies

The unit of analysis for this study was the higher education faculty of a particular higher education institution. The researcher examined the data and conducted extensive data collection drawing on multiple data sources (Meijer et al., 2002). The researcher used triangulation, with a strong intentional emphasis on (a) higher education faculty, their experiences documented through interviews; (b) institutional policy documents and data provided by various institutional officers; and (c) data collected on SWDs to compare to the literature; to provide three forms of data (Meijer et al., 2002).

Interviews

In order to fully understand higher education faculty and their experiences as professors of students with disabilities, formal interviews were conducted by the researcher. The researcher chose to use a video conferencing tool, Zoom, to conduct and record the interview sessions. This was beneficial because the researcher could review the interviews and analyze the recordings as official data. The researcher had 10 interview questions centered around the theme of adaptive pedagogy and accommodations for students with disabilities. The interviews were semi-structured and allowed for the researcher to follow up with any additional questions. The interviews lasted anywhere from 20 minutes to an hour and 10 minutes. This time frame enabled the participants to speak freely about their experiences; and to share their thoughts and strategies for instructing students with disabilities. The researcher aimed to have an authentic setting where participants had the opportunity to reflect upon their practice and share valuable lessons.

Policy Documents

The American National special education laws, such as the ADA, the HEOA, and other education laws were utilized during the analysis of higher education policy. Additionally, the researcher dissected the Sand University campus website and examined its current policy documents. The researcher also analyzed higher education national laws and state education laws. Next, the researcher analyzed special interest and nonprofit groups in the higher education field. The researcher corresponded with Sand University officers to gain insight about existing student policies. Via email correspondence, campus training officers shared valuable information into training programs.

SWD Data

Initially, the researcher analyzed relevant college student data sets and secondary literature relating to higher education policy and postsecondary SWDs (Lauría et al., 2012). The review of relevant literature was conducted to establish patterns of behaviors of faculty concerning SWDs, examine their perceptions toward SWDs, identify trends, and finally, offer solutions for improved classroom styles of teaching. The populations of SWDs in this study were based on universities and other higher education settings in the United States (Bayenet et al., 2000).

Institutional officers at Sand University provided key information about SWDs including: (a) the percentage of SWDs currently enrolled in courses, (b) statistics in comparison to their nondisabled counterparts, (c) accurate projections of SWDs' engagement during virtual learning (Lauría et al., 2012). Faculty interviews were also an essential method of data collection about SWDs at Sand University. They were instrumental in determining the in-depth experiences

between faculty and SWDs. This led the researcher to determine the actions, or interactions between higher education faculty and postsecondary SWDs (Lauría et al., 2012).

The policy structure evaluation process resulted from the synthesis of published literature and methodologies of postsecondary SWDs. Moreover, an extensive review of previous and revised U.S. policy legislation established the foundation of the literature that ensued. The literature review highlighted substantial gaps in U.S. legislation relating to SWDs and addressed current organizational issues that link faculty to the academic success of SWDs. The researcher examined articles, published peer-review journals, and previous and current legislation specifically focused on disabilities and accommodations in higher education (Bartman, 2010).

Examination of a Sophisticated Policy Structure

The policies of the university have been indirectly connected to the federal government and the U.S. Constitution (Bayenet et al., 2000). Public colleges and universities are the responsibility of the state and may be owned by the state. Specifically, state governments hold power, influence, and general authority over institutions (Bayenet et al., 2000). The majority of federal funding of higher education is through student financial aid programs and by funding research activities, acting in this instance as a client. This, in turn, directs that the institution becomes a social asset (Doyle, 2010).

Postsecondary education systems belong to state political cultures, and consequently, have various public policies. States develop and carry out these policies through a wide variety of entities: the state legislature, the governor, and various regulatory or coordinating agencies. Yet despite this variation, state policymakers have always had a relatively limited policy toolkit at their disposal, and they have tended to use available tools in similar ways.

In most states, the state government has the power to determine whether particular institutions will be allowed to operate within the boundaries of the state, and the conditions under which such permission will be granted (Bayenet et al., 2000). For public institutions, state action specifically establishes (and, rarely, disestablishes) institutions. For private institutions, most states have created registration or licensure requirements that must be met before such institutions are allowed to operate within the state (Bayenet et al., 2000).

The National Association of Independent Colleges and Institutions

Sand University is represented by national organizations such as the National Association of Independent Colleges and Institutions (NAICI), an organization that achieves advocacy and policy goals (NAICI, 2020). The NAICI addresses federal aid programs, regulates diversity, and promotes tax policies that assist families for college. Since 1976, the NAICI has been a nonprofit that includes more than 1,000 institutions in the U.S. NAICI represents a variety of institutions, including major research universities, religious colleges, and women's colleges, among others. Board members encourage support and oversee its financial administration (NAICI, 2020).

Participant Selection Procedure and Subject Population

Purposeful selection of participants was used in this study, precisely the “specific type of sampling strategy employed a maximum variation, and the size of the sample to be studied” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 157). Purposeful sampling allowed the researcher to create a pool of 100 faculty by choosing the first 100 faculty names and e-mail addresses on the approved university faculty list. Following this step, the researcher devised an online questionnaire (Embedded within Appendix A) with 10 qualifying questions with criteria (age, gender, race, teaching experience, tenure status, experience with SWDs, etc.). Pertinent background

information on the 14 participants was necessary and included the assigned letter representation for anonymity, their current or former positions, and their years of experience.

To augment the details provided by classroom educators, virtual interviews were conducted with higher education faculty members within two age ranges, multiple areas of disciplines, and early career or tenured status. The researcher assigned a different name to each faculty member to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of each of the participants. The names given are symbolic of these participants individual personalities, yet the pseudonyms ensure the participants' privacy. These codes and names of the faculty were kept confidential on a password-protected computer. A brief introduction of each participant ensues. Faculty information of the study participants shown in Table 2 includes the assigned pseudonyms or number, current or former positions, and their years of experience. (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Higher Education Faculty Status

Table 2

Higher Education Faculty Members at Sand University

Pseudonym	Position	Years of Experience
Elizabeth	Spanish	18
Wendy	Education	18
Margaret	Biology	30
Becky	English	10
Robert	Psychology	10+
Patty	Sociology	6
Todd	Languages	30+

Pseudonym	Position	Years of Experience
Pauline	Biology	22
Kim	French	17
May	Hispanic Studies	17
Barbara	Nonprofit management	2
Joe	Business	5
Ethan	Communication	6
Louise	Human Anatomy/Sports Medicine	15

By using purposeful sampling, higher education faculty at Sand University were selected to share their stories and practices in a higher education setting, specifically with teaching postsecondary SWDs. Fourteen subjects included 10 females and four males. By sharing their experiences of the classroom and teaching postsecondary SWDs, these 14 faculty members shed light on improvements for the future in higher education classrooms.

Participants' demographic information is depicted in Table 3, detailing the number of the total participants, gender, age range, department chair status, family members with disabilities, and tenure status. Each participant has taught in the higher education setting. These participants were selected for their knowledge and experience teaching students with disabilities, and as a result, the researcher did not exclude specific female participants to have an equal balance. Therefore, the focus was on the participant and their experience and knowledge, rather than their gender. As a result, this study included more female than male participants. The age range was devised as 35–50 and 51–70. All of the participants were within the appropriate age ranges, purposefully, half in one age range and a half in the other.

Table 3*Table of the Study Participants*

Participant Pseudonym	Age Range	Gender	Department Chair (D)	Family Members with disabilities	Tenure Status
Elizabeth	35-50	F	x	Y	>10 years
Wendy	>50	F	D	N	>10 years
Margaret	>50	F	x	N	>10 years
Becky	35-50	F	x	Y	>10 years
Robert	>50	M	D	N	>10 years
Patty	35-50	F	x	Y	<10 years
Todd	>50	M	x	N	>10 years
Pauline	>50	F	x	N	>10 years
Kim	35-50	F	x	Y	>10 years
May	35-50	F	x	N	>10 years
Barbara	>50	F	x	Y	<10 years
Joe	>50	M	x	Y	<10 years
Ethan	35-50	M	x	Y	<10 years
Louise	35-50	F	D	N	>10 years

Margaret and Todd have taught at Sand University 30 years, and both of them shared how teaching SWDs with disabilities has changed over the decades at this site, particularly since neither of them have had any formal pedagogical training. It is worth noting that three of the participants, Wendy, Robert, and Louise were, at one point in their careers, a department chair at Sand University. Wendy is an experienced teacher educator, with strong opinions and an

outgoing personality. Robert has been teaching psychology for more than 2 decades and tactfully shared his viewpoints. Louise, A tenured human anatomy professor, expressed her belief that not every student fit every field. Having held the department chair position, these professors contribute further knowledge of education at this university. This position of department chair gave them responsibility, and therefore, advanced knowledge, to share and impact this study. May, a tenured foreign languages professor, was vibrant and passionate about supporting SWDs. Even though May was not the department chair, she served as a dean of this university and worked closely with the OSA, and as the liaison for higher education faculty.

Even though there is a balance between the age of the faculty, the number of years that each participant has taught in higher education has a wide range. For example, two professors came from the business world with more than 30 years of experience, yet less than 10 years as a faculty member. Joe has only taught for five years since he entered higher education after serving more than 30 years as a vice president of a global food company. Joe demonstrated a growth mindset and was inquisitive about disabilities. He has attended university training and confessed that he felt slighted that there was not more information about disabilities topics.

Barbara was the director of a nonprofit before teaching at Sand University. Initially, she was unsmiling and stern, took the stance that SWDs need to be independent about their education. She came across as unsympathetic to SWDs. However, her demeanor altered as she self-disclosed that she has dyslexia and struggled in school. Having a disability herself influenced her feelings and interactions with other SWDs. Neither of these participants has had any previous formal pedagogy classes as part of their education. Joe attended some training sessions at Sand University to improve his instruction, however, he shared that he has not

implemented adaptive instructional techniques that were suggested by the trainer, which included providing closed captioning for his course videos.

Two study participants, Patty and Ethan are younger professors, each at the beginning of their careers. Patty is a sociology professor and studies disabilities among other topics within her field. Initially, Patty seemed reserved, yet surprisingly, she was talkative and willing to explore options about providing accommodations to SWDs beyond the restrictions of the site and the national laws. Ethan is a communications professor with six years of experience. Previous to becoming a college professor, he had the opportunity to work as an aide in a school and shared this during his interview. Both Patty and Ethan have had pedagogy courses either in their undergrad or Masters' work, yet neither of them conveyed educational or disability laws, including the IDEA or HEOA. The participants of the study have taught more than 10 years and have tenure status, which inherently, they are expected to have more experience with pedagogy.

There is a sensitivity associated with discussing disabilities that causes people to deflect questions on this topic when impacts them personally. For example, the particular question, "Do you have family members with disabilities?" is a personal, even private question that most people would avoid. However, this study specifically focuses on students with disabilities therefore, it is understandable that people who have family members with disabilities would respond to the query on this topic. More than half of the study participants expressed that they have family members with disabilities hence, their stories became more personal, and they had a vested interest in gaining more knowledge about SWDs. Furthermore, by expressing that they have family members with disabilities, these participants demonstrate a level of experience and sensitivity toward those with disabilities.

Seven of the participants reported having family members with disabilities. Only three of the participants disclosed personal information specifically about their family members. Three of the participants self-disclosed that they have a disability or mental health disorder, Becky, Patty, and Barbara. Becky is a young English professor who has taught for ten years. She was polite but firm in her beliefs that professors may not all be competent in teaching, and therefore, need more education and training. Initially, all three of these participants with disabilities were hesitant about revealing their confidential information. However, there is evidence of confidence in each of these participants after self-disclosing; therefore, each of them may have planned on sharing that perspective before accepting the interview. Even though they may have been careful about self-disclosing, once they shared this knowledge, all three of these participants exhibited behavior that demonstrated comfort, safety, and ease. It is worth noting that all of the six participants who shared about their families' disabilities and their disabilities were women. The researcher believes that 1 member of the 7 participants who shared their perspectives about a family member or shared about their disability, kept that information private during the interviews. If this is the case, then all seven participants would be accounted for in this category.

One question that the researcher did not specifically ask was: Do you have a disability? The researcher refrained from asking this question to maintain privacy and left it up to the respondents if they felt comfortable with self-disclosing. Three of the professors disclosed that they had a disability. Upon receiving this private information, the researcher probed only during the interviews but never asked a specific question about their disability before the interviews to honor the privacy of the participants.

Participant Questionnaire

Upon receiving a Notice of IRB Approval, (Appendix A) a 10-question Research Interview Guide was used for the interviews (Appendix B) and provided to each of the respondents before the interview. The researcher asked each of the participants a similar set of interview questions. As the respondents had different experiences in higher education, their responses led to short follow-up questions by the researcher not listed in the faculty questionnaire. For example, the researcher might have asked: And tell me more about that?; What was that like?; Could you explain further about that experience? These additional questions led to an in-depth explanation from the respondents.

Sampling Procedures

The researcher has public access to the university phone and e-mail catalog. The researcher identified current faculty members employed at the selected university site through the published university catalog. This catalog has a listing of more than 100 current faculty members, their phone extensions, and their e-mail addresses. Faculty were recruited via an e-mail request (Appendix C) through the university e-mail, with follow-up personal phone calls within 48 hours. Participants were informed that the purpose of the study was to acquire data about the in-depth experiences of higher education faculty and of providing accommodations to students with disabilities.

Once the potential subject completed the initial 10-question Screening Questionnaire that was embedded within the recruitment email and agreed to participate in the study, the researcher e-mailed the approved Pepperdine IRB Consent form (see Appendix D) to the subject. Upon receiving responses to the query, the researcher purposely selected appropriate candidates based on their responses to the questionnaire and identified the final pool of 14 faculty for in-depth

interviews. The discussion of the IRB forms occurred at this time via email, that addressed minimal risk (see Appendix E) and confidentiality (see Appendix F). The researcher reviewed its contents with the subject and clarified any areas that needed further clarification. Upon receiving the completed IRB form, the researcher scheduled a time to have the official Zoom session with the subject.

The final participants selected were those who represented different disciplines of sciences, social sciences, language and literature, and arts. The researcher sought to have approximately equal men and women. The researcher aimed to have full-time tenured professors and early career professors participate in the study via Zoom interviews, a platform using video conference calls. Zoom sessions were scheduled and conducted in place of the in-person interview because of COVID-19 (Miles et al., 2020).

In the spring of 2020, there was a global pandemic called COVID-19. This pandemic affected all nations and resulted in a stay-at-home and shelter-in-place order from all national leaders. It led to an increase in the use of the Zoom online computer conference platform, and no face-to-face meetings took place for the rest of this year, 2020. Consequently, to continue qualitative studies, researchers had to be approved to utilize this platform. The safety and convenience of the subjects were considered.

In March 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic impacted all postsecondary colleges and universities. The most notable immediate effect was that all students had to transition from in-person classes to remote online learning settings. This impacted faculty, as they may not have been trained in technology and may not have been familiar with the platform. This certainly impacted postsecondary SWDs and their courses as well. Sand University responded to the

pandemic by providing specific online training to all faculty and received an excellent response of 200-plus faculty members. However, there were no disability-related portions of this training.

Tenure Status

To best inform this study, a purposeful sample was utilized. The participants who were identified as full-time, tenured faculty members at a higher education institution were selected based on the following criteria:

- Currently employed as a full-time, tenured professor;
- Between the ages of 51 and 70;
- Have taught SWDs during their careers;
- Had begun teaching as a higher education faculty before 2001; and
- Possibly have served or currently serves as a department chair.

The participants who were identified as early-career faculty members at a higher education institution were selected based on the following criteria:

- Currently employed as a full-time, tenure-track professor;
- Between the ages of 35 and 50;
- Have taught SWDs during their careers; and
- Began teaching as higher education faculty after 2002.

The researcher determined that 14 subjects were an appropriate sample size for this study (Miles et al., 2020). A case study methodology was applicable for this study since the research questions and problems indicated the need to triangulate the data. Upon completing and reviewing each interview with selected faculty in the video-conferencing setting, the researcher created an Excel sheet with the recorded faculty data. The researcher then transferred all handwritten data from the interviews to the computer, interpreting and summarizing codes to categories, and linked themes based on thematic analysis (Miles et al., 2020). Finally, accessible student data and campus reports were also collected and analyzed to reveal the organizational structure at a university.

Data were collected and examined on higher-education faculty who instructed postsecondary SWDs (Miles et al., 2020). Researchers required the cooperation of the participants during the project and adhered to institutional guidelines (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The researcher requested formal permission to conduct research and received permission from the subject for a recorded interview via Zoom online platform (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Ethical Considerations

In qualitative studies, to protect those who participated in the study, it was essential for the researcher to adhere to ethical considerations. The researcher provided an informed consent form that allowed participants to participate voluntarily in the study and withdraw at any time. These measures protected participants against harmful events or acts. It also allowed and protected the confidentiality of all documents and conversations of the study participants. The researcher ensured that all discussions and formal publications were anonymous.

Individuals were asked to reflect on and expose their teaching experiences. A level of discomfort might have been experienced in the reflection and discussion process. Additional risks were a breach of confidentiality and breach of identification. The researcher understands that all studies have potential risks. Therefore, the researcher (a) prepared for necessary breaks for the subjects, (b) offered subjects online materials and contacts for medical services if necessary, and (c) offered an option to discontinue the interview.

Human Subject Consideration

The researcher was cognizant that sensitive discussions ensued. Consequently, to respect the participant's privacy, an informed consent form was used to protect human subjects. Each consent form was presented with a formal letter of intent, reason, or need for the research and

procedures of the interview process. All potential subjects were contacted directly by the researcher, who used purposeful selection of the university faculty contact list.

The researcher conducted a case study with human subjects; therefore, the goal was to create a process to ensure the safety and equal protection of her potential subjects. Consequently, measures were put in place to ensure respect for the study. First, the researcher avoided disclosing potentially harmful information. Moreover, the researcher was aware of situations that identified human subjects, particularly if the findings were negative (Arndt & Liles, 2010). The researcher disclosed positive results, avoided distressful language, and adhered to guidelines and procedures of disclosure of comprehensive findings (Arndt & Liles, 2010). No names or other identifying details were used.

IRB Application and Process

The researcher completed the IRB process before interviewing subjects. The researcher received approval and completed the mandatory online certification, Citi Training. Next, the researcher completed the IRB Research Project Application and prepared the Informed Consent Document. Finally, the researcher submitted the proposal form to the appropriate recipients (Bellevue College, 2020).

Data Analysis

Data that were collected entailed the analysis of multiple units within the case (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The data analysis process involved generating a description based on the specific utterances collected from each of the participants. These utterances were analyzed by the researcher to identify case themes. The emerging themes also represented issues or specific situations to study in each case (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A complete findings section of the case

involved both the description of the case and themes or issues. Finally, the themes were organized by the researcher highlighting similarities and differences.

An Excel spreadsheet, shown in Figure 6, and a formal codebook were constructed by the researcher and utilized to analyze research themes (Miles et al., 2020). A particular emphasis was placed on the accommodations provided by the higher education faculty, as interviews were of a single perspective: the faculty member's perspective. Figure 6, the Excel Spreadsheet for Data Analysis, shows the authentic spreadsheet utilized for data analysis. It is noted that letters and numbers were assigned to the participants prior to them being assigned pseudonyms, that are reflected in this document.

Figure 6

Excel Spreadsheet for Data Analysis (Illustrative purposes only)

	A	
1	Construct Code	Evidence
2	Access	We accepted them into the University. They should have access and thrive.
3	Rigor	Don't always know what the disability is no the accommodations, not the disability.
4	UDL	Attendance, note taker. Lots of reinforcement, Extended time, additional time on tests
5	Culture	"The student's success was driven by the effort that she was willing to put out."
6	Stigma	Faculty should have familiarity with disability law as it relates to higher Ed.
7	OSA	Rigor of the program.
8	Responsibility	Faculty understand the process of OSA in order to create accommodations or design accommodations to fit th
9	Visual	I think the faculty don't actively look for training."
10	Training	Professors reach out to the OSA and the website on an anecdotal basis.
11	Pedagogy	Professors reach out to the OSA and the website on an anecdotal basis. There should be a knowledge of speci
12	ADA	I think that we should require more training for faculty.
13	Rapport	So, I have a heart for teaching students with exceptionalities.
14	Teaching	And I think they're trying to make sure that we are emphasizing to help all students access the curriculum.
15	Scaffolded	I think it's (faculty attitudes) critical. If I'm not working my hardest to help every student access the curriculum
16	Privacy	There is quite honestly, a lot of resistance in terms of not going to read the questions or I'm not going to make
17	Diagnosis	Sand University came under fire for not providing the supports that they need to...so the OSA came in to say,
18	Resistant	There, is pushback from some professors so I would say we are legally bound to...you must, it's not optional, y
19	Confidentiality	You're not watering down the curriculum nor helping them you know we need to spice it up not water it down
20	Privacy	There's a difference between teaching and learning.
21	Inclusion	You're touching a very sensitive issue to me 'cause there's so many professors who are super smart in their field
22	Advocate	I think they need to have classes and pedagogy and they need to know the law around the student and "OK he
23	Equity	Those in Higher Ed, not familiar with IDEA, PL-94, 192 and all that, they don't know and I think they don't make
24	Singles Out	I'm sure there are some professors out there that are at least not cooperative, or don't make it easy for their s

Explanation of the Data Analysis Tool

Qualitative coding was necessary for this study. The researcher examined Case Themes, "not for generalizing beyond the case but for understanding the complexity of the case" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 100). Initially, the researcher listened to video conferencing audio

recordings of the participants' interviews, along with a printed transcript of the participant's audio recordings. Through word repetition and explicitly defining the text, the researcher identified specific phrases that exposed the meaning or a concept in relation to the research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The words and phrases collected from the text lead to the labels for open coding, or categories (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 203).

Upon creating the Excel sheet, the researcher entered specific demographic items of each of the participants. For example, gender, tenure status, formal pedagogy. During analysis, each phrase of the participants was analyzed to determine if it was suitable to be categorized as evidence. The researcher labeled the participant's utterances as "evidence" during analysis. All 14 participants' transcripts were included in this process and all transcripts were analyzed from the beginning to the end of each transcript. On the Excel sheet, the quantity of utterances varied among the participants, yet this variation was not significant.

To analyze qualitative data, the researcher invested time for the reading and listening to transcripts and looked for similarities and differences to develop themes and connect overlapping themes (Wong, 2008). Creswell and Poth (2018) suggested narrowing data to five to six themes. Coding issues were likely to happen, so the researcher planned for handling these issues (Creswell & Poth, 2018). For example, to measure qualitative data, questioning is used as a coding strategy to develop a hypothesis rather than measuring. When coding issues occurred, the researcher had developed a strategy to handle irregularities. Several issues were important to address during the coding process, such as counting codes, yet a "count conveys that all codes should be given equal emphasis" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 183), even though they represented different points of views. Moreover, there were preexisting codes that warranted much controversy among researchers. Finally, there may have been issues with the type of information

a qualitative researcher coded, whether they were looking at processes, actions, or interactions (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The researcher used in vivo codes, or the exact words of the subjects that were transcribed (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher developed codes that represented information that was expected that they found surprising, or interesting. As technology has advanced, so has the method of collecting data (Wong, 2008). Trint Transcriptions replaced a hands-on method of transcribing data. This was less arduous and more manageable for qualitative researchers (Wong, 2008). The researcher has two years of experience using Trint; therefore, Trint was the researcher's tool to analyze transcripts. These transcripts were recorded so the researcher had the opportunity to listen numerous times to the recordings.

Researchers must have mastery of the literature before advancing emerging themes (Miles et al., 2020). In this case study, the researcher thoroughly analyzed relevant literature and made observations throughout data collection and analysis. Through a deep understanding of the literature, the researcher added the previously established data to the new data as it was being collected. The new perspectives built on the initial research of faculty experiences in a real-life context (Miles et al., 2020). In the end, this study resulted in a more in-depth understanding of faculty experience with SWDs based on the case study data.

Specific Structures and Procedures

Below are the specific structures and the research procedures the researcher put in place during her research investigation.

Pilot Study

The researcher created a 10-question interview guide. To determine the tool's reliability, the researcher selected three professors chosen at random, and administered the interview

questions via e-mail. The researcher was in accordance with IRB compliance. The researcher followed up with each professor 24 hours after the questions had been administered to schedule a Zoom session upon confirmation that the professors received the questions and examined them and determined the validity of the tool.

Validation Procedures for the Research Tool

Prior to beginning the validation process, the researcher received accurate validation of the questionnaire via e-mail and phone conference; therefore, Zoom video conferencing recording was unnecessary in this process. In the validation process, some variations occurred. The researcher administered the research tool to 13 separate professors and received feedback from seven professors. These professors were not the study participants. This input from professionals in this area is valid since they are experts from the same fields as the study subjects. Upon receiving these experts' comments, the researcher made the appropriate adjustments to the tool that was utilized with the study subjects.

Semistructured Interviews—Protocol

The researcher created 10 questions directly addressing faculty awareness of:

- Academic supports for postsecondary SWDs;
- Perception of the postsecondary education of SWDs;
- Ability to implement accommodations;
- Institutional policies and guidelines of SWDs; and
- Special education Federal legislation.

Table 3 demonstrates the relationship among the research question, interview questions and the literature.

Table 4*Relationship Among Research Question, Interview Questions, and Literature*

Research Questions	Interview Questions	Literature Sources
Research Question 1: What are the academic supports that university faculty have provided to students with disabilities (SWDs) and were these interventions successful?	Faculty Questions <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What experiences do you have with instructing postsecondary SWD, particularly with LD? 2. How would you describe the level of importance of students such as those with LD, and faculty relationships have on increasing postsecondary program retention? 3. Describe a time you encountered someone with a disability. 4. What strategies do you use for SWDs who require intense modifications to their academic programs? 5. Describe how you approach and interact with colleagues in the accessibility department on the behalf of an SWD? 6. Describe the importance of a faculty member's attitudes toward a postsecondary student with a disability. 7. To what extent do you believe faculty impact SWDs' overall academic achievement? 8. To what extent do you feel faculty at higher education institutions require training in special education laws and instructional techniques for teaching SWDs? 9. To what extent do you feel the college or university has a responsibility to support postsecondary SWDs? 10. What suggestions would you have for postsecondary faculty members and university administrators as it pertains to increasing SWD retention and supporting their academic success? 	(Sniatecki et al., 2015). (DuPaul, Pinho, et al., 2017). (West et al., 2016; Smith, 2005). (Lombardi et al., 2011). (Shaw et al., 2010). (Leyser et al., 2011). (Ackermann, 2001). (Murray et al., 2009). (Petcu et al., 2014). (Lightfoot et al., 2018). (Zhang et al., 2010).

Research Questions	Interview Questions	Literature Sources
Research Question 2: What is the university model [policies and practices] for supporting students with disabilities (SWDs)?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain what type of SDI you have used in your classroom. 2. Describe the level of importance of faculty meeting SWDs for regular office hours. 3. Describe your proficiency in knowledge of special education laws? How might these laws impact your instruction? 4. What strategies do you use for SWDs who require intense modifications to their academic programs? 5. Describe how you provide appropriate accommodations. 6. Describe the importance of faculty attitude toward a postsecondary SWDs. 7. To what extent do you believe faculty expect SWDs to perform proficiently without accommodations? 8. To what extent do you feel faculty at higher education institutions require training in special education laws and instructional techniques for teaching SWDs? 9. To what extent do you feel the institution is right to deny an SWDs their requested accommodation? 10. What suggestions would you have for postsecondary faculty members and providing appropriate accommodations to SWDs? 	<p>(Sniatecki et al., 2015). (DuPaul, Pinho, et al., 2017). (Petcu et al., 2014). (Lombardi et al., 2011). (Leyser et al., 2011). (Huger, 2011). (West et al., 2016). (Lightfoot et al., 2018). (Cooc, 2019).</p>
Research Question 3: What do university faculty recommend to their institution and other universities for instructing students with disabilities (SWDs)?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is your current level of knowledge of SDI? 2. How would you describe the level of importance of faculty meeting SWDs for regular office hours? 3. How would you describe your proficiency in knowledge of special education laws? 4. What strategies do you use for SWDs who require intense modifications to their academic programs? 5. Describe how you provide appropriate accommodations. 6. Describe the importance of faculty attitude toward a postsecondary SWDs. 	<p>(Sniatecki et al., 2015). (DuPaul, Pinho, et al., 2017). (Petcu et al., 2014). (Lombardi et al., 2011). (Leyser et al., 2011). (Huger, 2011). (West et al., 2016). (Chiu et al., 2019). (Huger, 2011).(Listed twice in this cell.) (Cooc, 2019).</p>

Research Questions	Interview Questions	Literature Sources
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. To what extent do you believe faculty expect SWDs to perform proficiently without accommodations? 8. To what extent do you feel faculty at higher education institutions require training in special education laws and instructional techniques for teaching SWDs? 9. To what extent do you feel the institution right to deny an SWDs their requested accommodation? 10. What suggestions would you have for postsecondary faculty members and providing appropriate accommodations to SWDs? 	

Field Issues and Distance Interviewing Protocol

Observation leads researchers to a greater understanding of their study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). However, no in-person or on-site interviews were conducted. Field notes are highly recommended in qualitative research as a method of documenting needed contextual information. The researcher took observation notes during the zoom sessions of the participants and took notes during the additional viewings of each of the participants videos.

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative researchers may observe their subjects and record in field texts, examine stories, collect documents, pictures, and videos from subjects. However, because of COVID-19, the researcher conducted interviews via an online platform Zoom for the safety of both the researcher and other participants. Online Interviews were stored in a confidential file on the computer belonging to the researcher. Computer-generated graphic organizers were stored securely, and the use of alternative names, concept maps, and Excel charts were stored appropriately (Miles et al., 2020). The researcher backed up the collected information.

Case Description and Vignettes

Descriptive vignettes were employed to show effective representation of faculty concerns, yet limited to a brief time frame, a bounded space, and a few key actors (Miles et al., 2020). For this study, these vignettes were “adapted stories embedded within interview transcripts” (Miles et al., 2020, p. 180). An entry vignette allowed the reader to feel the context in which the case took place. Benefits of a case study were narrative description, both historical and organizational information significant to the case (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Case description was necessary for the case study approach, particularly, the facts about the case as recorded by the investigator. Case description was the first step in analysis of data in a case study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). There was in-depth focus on institutional processes and how to unravel complex systems, such as universities (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher looked at a single instance and described it, hoping that the issue-relevant meanings would come to light. The researcher then examined the relationships between two categories and looked for similarities and differences. The researcher revisited the data and drafted summary statements of recurring components found in the data. This process has led the researcher to lesson learned or assertions (Stake, 1995). Finally, the researcher developed lessons learned and applied it to a greater context, specifically to other universities (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Themes

The process of organizing the data impacted the final themes. Initially, the researcher sorted the metadata and entered these labels on an Excel sheet. The researcher categorized words by their repetition, frequency, and relevance to the dissertation topic. The researcher analyzed and coded themes that occurred in the transcripts. During this analysis, the researcher discovered

prominent themes that occurred throughout all of the videos. A list of 36 words, or labels, were collected. Six recurring themes have emerged throughout the coding process as predominant. Based on the faculty interviews, there are six themes that have emerged as a result of the researcher's analysis. These themes are (a) access, (b) confidentiality, (c) academic rigor, (d) faculty/SWD relationships, (e) culture, and (f) compassion/sensitivity.

Codes to Categories

In the first stages of research, an interview guide with specific leading questions was formulated to collect confidential data, before the online interviews were collected. The interview guide was sent to participants via e-mail and returned to the researcher prior to the Zoom interviews (Miles et al., 2020). The researcher used these questions to probe and develop new questions during each interview.

- Semistructured interviews-protocol (10 guided questions);
- Descriptive vignettes;
- Observations noted during online interviews; and
- Analysis of online interviews.

The researcher built detailed descriptions and developed themes (Daly-Cano et al., 2015). By conducting thematic analysis of the interview questions, researchers stimulate dialogue and open-ended questions (Braun & Clark, 2006). Once themes were established, the researcher coded themes and transcribed them using Trint software, a high-quality, reliable recoding system. These were transferred to a formal codebook. The codebook contained the following: (a) name of the code, (b) description of the code boundaries through inclusion and exclusion criteria, and (c) examples of the code using data. A formal Excel sheet was created to code the data and find similarities between faculty members. To ensure validity, an interrater reviewed the researcher's data. The researcher began by classifying the data. The researcher's interview guide was examined to establish themes. The codebook was developed, utilized, and analyzed to draw

the researcher's conclusions. The researcher reported the lessons learned based on the data provided by faculty.

Researchers must have a strong understanding of the literature before developing emerging themes. In this approach, the researcher referred to the literature that was relevant to the research topic and the qualitative observations throughout data collection and analysis (Miles et al., 2020). By providing key points and interpreting the data properly in an authentic manner, this method, case study, explained and imparted lessons learned from the collected data, and with skilled analysis by the researcher (Miles et al., 2020).

Validity and Trustworthiness

Threats to validity in this study were most notably that faculty may be cautious about telling the truth. They may not have disclosed the truth to the researcher. They may not have revealed that they were not aware of postsecondary accommodations, special education laws, and classroom and educational accommodations of SWDs (Lombardi et al., 2011). Moreover, faculty may adopt the notion that their authentic responses may have appeared to be unappealing to the researcher. This may have resulted in faculty members feeling discredited, believing that they seem to be incompetent. Consequently, faculty members may have masked the truth and avoided being transparent to remain self-assured, and thus, diminished the validity of the study.

Qualitative researchers must have a plan of action to increase the validity of their studies (Miles et al., 2020). Trustworthiness and security stabilize validity in the study.

Validity

The researcher adhered to strict measures to protect their subjects (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data that were collected were appropriately secured for the protection of all faculty members. Furthermore, since this research involved the faculty of postsecondary SWDs, security

measures were enforced, particularly with pseudonyms to protect the subjects' identifying details, such as Elizabeth, Wendy, etc. Items were marked with the confidential labels throughout this process and secured (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Ethical human subject releases were used for each subject's protection (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A generic method was used for analyzing data.

Reliability of data from interviews was derived through coding the raw data, which also was computerized using the software Trint. In addition, audio recording of all interviews was used to increase their reliability. Additionally, an interrater reviewed the researcher's data. Ultimately, the reliability of observations was achieved through triangulation.

To establish credibility, the researcher utilized triangulation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The purpose of triangulation ensured that the researcher has used more than one source to validate the data. The researcher collaborated the evidence through the triangulation of multiple data sources. Ultimately, this technique led to a "new theme or perspective" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 260). Validity of data was measured by triangulation. After completing the interviews, the researcher gathered additional data by analyzing the university website and through engaging in informal conversations and e-mail with university officers. By collecting additional data, the researcher enhanced the triangulation of the data.

Conclusion

As a qualitative researcher, the researcher has gained a deep understanding of the value of these processes involved in case studies. Furthermore, she has employed these strategies throughout the study. This allowed the researcher to grow in this field as a social scientist and hone her craft of qualitative research.

There is a gap addressed, specifically, the awareness of higher-education faculty and their knowledge of accommodations. Furthermore, this topic is relevant and scarce. The researcher's plan for the reported findings include: (a) evaluate the most pressing need of faculty and the institution, (b) recommend appropriate changes to the faculty and the institution, and (c) devise a program to incorporate strategies and advance positive changes nationally and globally.

The foundation of faculty knowledge did not currently exist for postsecondary SWDs' academic needs and supports (Barnett, 2012). This case study examined the lived experiences of higher education faculty. Furthermore, this study was a sound method to provide authentic answers about higher-education faculty's needs and recommendations for instructing SWDs (Barnett, 2012).

Chapter 4: Results

Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the results obtained through responses to one set of questions posed to individuals of one category. These individuals are current or former faculty members of a U.S. southwestern private university with expertise in a variety of fields. Furthermore, they were identified as being affiliated with this university as current, practicing, or retired faculty. Other differences included age and tenure status.

Following the introduction are the problem statement, the research questions, and the rationale and connection to the research questions. The qualitative methodology utilized to collect the data follows. Next, an analysis of the policy structure is detailed. An interrater provided the validation needed to authenticate the findings, with a thorough evaluation of the researcher's codebook and Excel sheet. Next, the researcher calculated the Interrater Ratio. The chapter continues with the formal presentation of the findings, that includes an in-depth analysis of the data. The researcher identified themes and provided detail that led to a vivid description of the faculty's experiences with postsecondary SWDs and strategies that each of them used to inform their instruction (Lai & Wang, 2019).

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine what academic supports faculty have provided to SWDs and determine the level success of these interventions. This study also analyzed the model of this university. Fourteen higher education faculty members participated in the study, and upon receiving each professor's informed consent form, the researcher provided 10 interview questions for their review and preparation. The interview questions reflected the problem statement of the study that posed that higher education faculty often lack formal

pedagogical training, particularly in the area of special education and disabilities studies.

Consequently, higher education faculty struggle to implement effective teaching strategies and provide appropriate accommodations for postsecondary SWDs (Schreifels, 2013; Sniatecki, et al., 2015).

Research Questions

Three research questions guided this study:

- What are the academic supports that university faculty have provided to students with disabilities (SWDs) and were these interventions successful?
- What is the university model [policies and practices] for supporting students with disabilities (SWDs)?
- What do university faculty recommend to their institution and other universities for instructing students with disabilities (SWDs)?

The essence of the first question is that faculty need further training, particularly in adaptive education or disability services. Regarding the second question, faculty may realize that they must service SWDs by law, but they do not always know what actions to take to address each situation. As a result, each participant shared different coping strategies to implement accommodations for SWDs. For example, some of the participants, such as Margaret and Louise, explained how they stalled on providing accommodations as a result of not knowing what to do before contacting the OSA for guidance. Other participants, such as Joe, sought out colleagues for advice, while a few, such as Pauline, experimented with their courses and program materials. They all needed assistance implementing accommodations to SWDs. These behaviors exhibited by the participants may occur at other colleges and universities and may become a national concern.

Rationale and Connection to the Research Questions

The rationale for this study was to gain in-depth knowledge of higher education faculty members' beliefs about instructing SWDs. During in-depth interviews, study participants described their perceptions and experiences instructing postsecondary SWDs. They also discussed their use of academic supports to improve student success in college and society. Additionally, the goal of this study aimed to understand faculty member's teaching and instruction strategies and to provide valuable insight to other professors of SWDs on a national and global level (Debrand & Salzberg, 2005).

Qualitative Methodology

This study employed a qualitative case study framework using a cross-sectional approach that involved semistructured interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher applied triangulation procedures to corroborate the literature, including additional online resources. It is essential to use multiple procedures (triangulation) during the analysis stage to reduce possible sources of error and missing data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher conducted live Zoom sessions as the chosen method to document observations that allowed the researcher to have multiple opportunities to review the data and gain a thorough perspective of each of the participants. The interviews elicited an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of higher education faculty who currently teach or have taught postsecondary SWDs (Lai & Wang, 2019).

The researcher posed questions regarding the participants' previous life experiences, beyond the professors' classrooms, to gain an in-depth picture of their knowledge and teaching strategies for instructing SWDs. The interactions of the faculty and their reflections with SWDs' were analyzed through video analysis to offer the researcher multiple opportunities for deep reflection. Furthermore, the researcher reviewed each written transcript and highlighted relevant

data to establish patterns. Finally, the researcher transferred any handwritten notes to the computer and allowed for further reflective analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Policy Structure at the Research Site

Portions of this research preceded the data collection, specifically, the analysis of the policy structure at the research site. Immediately prior to the data collection, the policy landscape was clarified. There are many components to the policy structure at Sand University that make it an exemplary and sophisticated example for other universities, including its Student Accessibility services. First and foremost, the university's Office of Student Accessibility (OSA) complies with the ADA and Section 504 federal disability legislation, and that these protections are broad. SWDs have federal protections and, therefore, shall not be denied access to the participation of any services or programs at this university. Currently, there is no mention of the HEOA and its protections for SWDs at Sand University.

Sand University has a board of regents that serves as an advisory committee to the president of the university. The OSA reports to the provost to discuss existing or newly developed programs. Each year, the OSA invites new or individual faculty to an informal meeting or a meet-and-greet to make faculty aware of the purpose of the OSA and its services to SWDs and faculty. These strategies reflect the existing protocols of the OSA and its mandates for supporting and providing accommodations to SWDs.

The OSA plays a major role in training faculty and providing services to faculty for SWDs. The OSA has offered faculty development training in DS and directed faculty to its website for additional resources when there are new policies and guidelines from the Office of Civil Rights. Additionally, the OSA has offered optional training opportunities via the Association of Higher Education and Disability, such as webinars, workshops, and in-person

conferences when the office has appropriate funding. At this time, the university does not require faculty, new or otherwise, to attend formal disability-related training. Moreover, the OSA receives grants to bring in disability and legal professionals to train faculty, deans, and administrators. The OSA also participates in a local consortium, the Southern California Disability Consortium, which meets a few times a year, and highlights speakers from the Office of Civil Rights and other various disability firms.

The OSA provides services such as defining what a disability is and how the college defines various disabilities for people and academic faculty on campus. It explicitly defines the language of disabilities for the admission of SWDs and how it connects with the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. It is stated that SWDs desiring to enroll in any program or activity, “must be able to meet the minimal standards” (Sand University)² of the university and the program. Even though the university may not discriminate against a student with a disability, it is at the university’s discretion whether to admit the student upon their disclosure of their disability.

The university intends to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities. Accommodations are designed to level the playing field for SWDs while maintaining the integrity and standards of the university’s academic programs. SWDs must follow the procedures and guidelines outlined according to the campus OSA, and OSA officers are available to assist students with disabilities. Currently, 11% of the students at Sand University are SWDs (Sand University).³ There are three full-time representatives and two part-time staff in the OSA who serve this percentage of SWDs.

² Reference information has been omitted to protect the identity of the research site

³ Reference information has been omitted to protect the identity of the research site

Once a student is admitted to the university, if the student requests accommodations, then it is recommended that they start the process as soon as possible. Receiving appropriate accommodations for academics is a time-consuming process for all parties: the officers at the OSA, the student with the disability, and the faculty members. It is noted by the OSA that SWDs should be forthcoming about their disability, as they cannot assume that the university has read all of their documents. The OSA may assist with formal documentation and testing. The OSA recognizes and states that each student with a disability is seen as an individual, and their needs are addressed on a case-by-case basis.

An SWD with a learning disability must provide professional testing and evaluation results that reflect the individual's present level of processing information and achievement level. The director of OSA monitors a formal documentation process. Accommodation request decisions are based on a variety of factors, including functional limitations of the disability, a particular academic course, and whether the request would alter the fundamental nature of the course and/or course objectives. The OSA is the point of contact for postsecondary SWDs.

If a faculty member objects to providing improved accommodation, the accommodation must be provided until the director of the OSA has made a final decision regarding the accommodation. Faculty may not determine whether the student receives the accommodation; this is explicitly the responsibility of the director of the OSA. If the SWD is in disagreement with the director's decision regarding their requested accommodation, they may submit a written complaint to the office of the provost, who addresses these grievances and investigations. The university reserves the right to investigate all complaints where necessary to protect the interests of the university (Sand University).⁴

⁴ Reference information has been omitted to protect the identity of the research site

Even though this is an exemplary model for other universities, Sand University has overlooked the specific national disability legislation of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (P.L. 110-315), the HEOA (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). Part D of Title VII of the HEOA, which was enacted during the summer of 2008, explicitly states, that “Institutions will provide postsecondary faculty, staff, and administrators with the skills and support necessary to teach in meet the academic needs of students with disabilities and institutions will improve the retention of students with disabilities” (U.S. Department of Education, 2020).

Validation

To validate the study, the researcher created a formal codebook, as shown in Table 5 (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher coded the participant utterances using an Excel sheet. The researcher did an independent calibration and held a collaboration session with an interrater. Finally, the researcher completed the coding and calculated the codes. The researcher independently generated the percentage agreement for all of the codes. The interrater reliability of the coding process was calculated.

Table 5

Codebook for Qualitative Coding

Prototype/Code name	Definition	Criterion for Boundary (in)	Criterion for Boundary (out)	Example Utterances
Access	Any evidence when an individual is granted entry and is ensured equal opportunities	Use when there is a description of supports, accommodations, inclusion with nondisabled peers, and mainstreaming peer activities.	Do not apply the term access with confidentiality, faculty relationships, academic rigor, or culture.	We accepted them into the university. They should have access and thrive.

Prototype/Code name	Definition	Criterion for Boundary (in)	Criterion for Boundary (out)	Example Utterances
Confidentiality	Evidence of disability status or related private information	Use when there is a description or discussion of private matters, a specific diagnosis, a specific explanation for a student's need, the Office of Accessibility, and self-disclosure of parties.	Do not use when referring to access, faculty relationships, academic rigor, or training aspects of this university culture.	When we get the letters about the students, about giving them extra adjustments, they don't tell us their diagnosis. And the student doesn't have to tell us their diagnosis.
Academic Rigor	Evidence of the level at which students are challenged to think, learn, and grow to advance to a new level	Use when there is a description of specific curriculum, nondisabled peer comparison, offering inclusive, mainstream courses, opportunities to challenge and increase knowledge.	Do not use when referring to the OSA confidentiality, faculty relationships, or training aspects of this university culture.	You're not watering down the curriculum nor helping them you know we need to spice it up, not water it down.
Faculty/SWDs relationship	Evidence fostering a climate through ethical means that nurtures the advancement and pursuit of knowledge.	Use when there is a description of feelings, interactions, and/or the description of a connection between SWDs and faculty members.	Do not use when referring to confidentiality, academic rigor, compassion and sensitivity, or culture.	Teacher-student dyad is so crucial to understanding everything, including accommodations, including how students learn better one way or another.

Prototype/Code name	Definition	Criterion for Boundary (in)	Criterion for Boundary (out)	Example Utterances
Culture	Any evidence demonstrating characteristics of a particular group of people	Use when there is a description of the specific site, a comparison to other universities, university programs, offices, divisions, and interactions between the faculty.	Do not use when referring to confidentiality, faculty relationships, academic rigor, or compassion and sensitivity.	Special Education in disability studies is still a relatively new topic for this university.
Compassion/ Sensitivity	Evidence demonstrating the awareness of the needs of others, showing sympathy.	Use when there is a description of faculty awareness of a need or specific need of a SWD or a concern about the wellbeing of the SWD, and interactions displaying sympathy, empathy and vivid displays of understanding.	Do not use when referring to confidentiality, faculty relationships, academic rigor, or university culture.	I mean, you have to have an attitude of 'Hey, these are disabilities that exist, and I've got to be sensitive to them.'

The codebook was created by the researcher and analyzed by both the researcher and the interrater. This codebook includes the most prevalent themes that emerged from the participants' responses. Furthermore, it includes definitions of each code and explains the specific criterion when it can be applied during coding (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Examples of each of the codes are demonstrated. This codebook was created based on the Excel sheet and analyzed by the researcher and the interrater.

The results are as follows: there were six codes: access, confidentiality, academic rigor, faculty and student relationship, culture, and compassion/sensitivity. There were 192 utterances.

That implies 1,152 possible codes. Out of the 1,152 codes, 1,062 were agreed upon by the researcher and the interrater, yielding an interrater ratio of 92.1%. Table 6 displays the number of codes linked to the participants utterances, highlights the possible utterances, codes, agreements and differences between the raters, and the total.

Table 6

Number of Codes Linked to the Participant's Utterances

<i>Participant's Utterances</i>					
Number of Participants	Possible Utterances	Codes	Agreed by both Raters	Disagreed by both Raters	Total
14	192	6	1,062	90	1,152
14	X	X	90	8	98

The process of having an interrater analyze the codes was beneficial to the researcher. Since there are 14 participants and six codes, there are 84 possible code agreements. The researcher and interrater agreed on 76 codes and disagreed on eight codes. Comparing codes provided clarity in reaching the same target and increased the reliability of the data (Creswell & Poeth, 2018). Table 7 shows the variances in the codes compared by the raters.

Table 7

The Variances in the Codes Compared by the Researcher and the Interrater

Access	X	X	+	X	+	+	X	X	+	+	+	+	+	+
Confidentiality	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Academic Rigor	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Faculty/SWD Relationship	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	X	X	+	X	+	+

Culture	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Compassion/ Sensitivity	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

The process of discussing the various lines of code allowed for a new level of understanding. For example, the researcher and interrater discussed a single line of code from one participant as a team and agreed on its interpretation (Herrenkohl et al., 2019). Alternately, the researcher and the interrater may have come back together with their data and changed certain lines of code, depending on their interpretation. It is crucial to discuss anything that is unclear or where interpretation may be in alignment with the data. It was beneficial for the researcher to understand why the codes might change (Palincsar & Herrenkohl, 2002).

Site and Setting

Sand University is located in the southwestern United States and is a small, private university. It has a rich history and, throughout several decades, has been nationally recognized. Currently, it has 383 faculty members of various academic disciplines. The interviews provided descriptions of relational practices with SWDs. The study conditions proved workable in producing data to address the research questions. This study is valuable to the extent that others may gain further insights into higher education faculty experiences, best practices, and the instructional strategies for teaching postsecondary SWDs. The results expressed in-depth stories to chronicle the day-to-day events of the faculty (Creswell & Poth, 2018). While these faculty members are connected by their allegiance to this university, their stories are unique and emerge from a place based on each of their personal histories.

Each of the study participants is a professional academic and has made an impression in their chosen field. Currently, at Sand University, there is no evidence of training in special education, disability studies, or pedagogical training for professors with advanced degrees.

However, at the time of the study, the university had previously taken measures to train its faculty through its selected training office. This office oversees faculty training, and as a result of COVID-19, in March 2020, a specific virtual program was offered to more than 200 Sand University faculty and staff. These faculty and staff attended this virtual training voluntarily. Another training which focused on improving educational equity and diversity, was implemented during the summer of 2020. During their interviews, several study participants referenced one or both of these professional development initiatives.

The participants' stories illustrated the various instances of professional development at Sand University. Professional development and ongoing training, such as the newly developed initiatives, offer opportunities for faculty improvement in practice and the faculty's student perspective. Even with this progress in training topics, there are still gaps in professor knowledge of disability topics and providing proper accommodations of SWDs.

Presentation of Findings

Higher education faculty members of Sand University have demonstrated different viewpoints regarding their beliefs about SWDs. Furthermore, some faculty have had experiences showing the students' nonperformance in academic settings. Ultimately, the interviews conveyed both positive and negative experiences with SWDs.

Faculty members based their reflections on their specific experiences with postsecondary SWD. While the themes were reported confidentially, there is considerable overlap among them. Additionally, participants' responses to interview questions may have addressed more than one theme, and therefore, the data were presented where they were suitable. The study participants contributed different amounts of information on the six themes. Some participants talked at length about one or two themes, while other participants made nearly equal contributions across

all themes. All of the participants' voices and perspectives were evident. Portions of the interviews were edited for conciseness and clarity, eliminating the verbiage that was inconsistent. The data reflect that the participant responses were both positive and negative with postsecondary SWDs. It is out of these experiences that the following themes emerged: access, confidentiality, academic rigor, faculty/SWD relationships, culture, and compassion/sensitivity.

Theme 1: Participants' Perceptions of and Experiences with Access

The term access, (Definition of Terms, Chapter 1) is defined as when an individual gains entry and is ensured equal opportunities (Curry, 2020). Furthermore, a student with a disability has the opportunity to take full advantage of education, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability in an equally integrated and equally effective manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use (Curry, 2020). To elaborate on the concept of access for this study, SWDs may participate, develop skills, and learn in the same environment as their nondisabled peers. According to the researcher's explanation, accommodations are not synonymous with access. SWDs gain access to the general education program and the curriculum; however, the accommodations are separate yet necessary additions to the program to support SWDs to reach the curriculum but is not the program. Therefore, accommodations and access are different terms in this study.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the connection between the literature and themes such as access is present. Access for people (not specifically students) with disabilities, was written in such laws as the Rehabilitation Act (Sniatecki et al., 2015). Years later, the ADA mandated that all institutions must provide services (not academic accommodations) to receive federal funding, and was stated in loose terms (Kraska, 2003). Consequently, there are still questions from faculty about what access to higher education means for postsecondary SWDs. Barriers such as

stigmatization, low self-esteem, trust among faculty, and difficulties with attention and concentration still exist and block some SWDs from advancing in their academic programs (Megivern et al., 2003).

SWDs who attend Sand University have inadvertently posed challenges for faculty members. They have obligated faculty to consider alternative methods of instruction. However, differentiation of the higher education curriculum tends to be fixed, as many of the faculty may be unable (or unwilling) to alter the standard curriculum of the university. Consequently, the OSA, deans, division leaders, and other officers of the university may be required to oversee the implementation procedures of the curriculum to ensure access and inclusion to all students, including SWDs.

The participants spoke candidly about specific instances of students they taught. On a case-by-case basis, these professors shared their struggles and successes in providing different types of accommodations to their SWDs. Since their SWDs' educations are at stake, professors, such as Elizabeth, aim to adhere to the university's academic mission. Elizabeth is a language professor who has worked as a university officer as well. She is very outspoken and knowledgeable about students' rights. Elizabeth stated, "I think Sand University is trying to make sure that we are emphasizing to help all students access the curriculum."

An institution, such as Sand University, may not always know about minute-to-minute and day-to-day interactions between faculty members and SWDs. Some interactions may pose issues of accessibility, yet they may seem minuscule and never be addressed. The following individual stories illustrate the points of view of the faculty of this institution. Furthermore, they allow for further insight and development at the divisional and institutional level of this university.

Participants of the study described the concept of access. Some professors discussed people or institutional positions responsible for providing access to SWDs.

In some cases, the responsibility was theirs and, in other cases, it was the responsibility of the institution. Some participants talked about the frequency of instructing SWDs, while others focused on a specific instance they had encountered. Most of the faculty described barriers to access that they had witnessed among SWDs. The subsequent section offers a description of access.

All 14 participants reported that they had experiences with SWDs consistent with the student's need for equal access to higher education. Elizabeth summed up the events that occurred among them by stating, "We accepted them into the university. They should have access and thrive." Louise stressed the need for a smooth transition between high school and college and recommended a liaison or coach in the early college terms of SWDs, "like an onramp."

Wendy shared how her experience in providing accommodations reflected the institution's involvement in the process. She said, "Sand University came under fire for not providing the supports that they needed to, so the OSA came in to say, 'No, you do need to provide these supports.'"

Faculty may be unaware of the specific mandatory university policies. Consequently, there is a lack of certainty about the policies of institutional accommodations for SWDs. Elizabeth remarked, "There should be a knowledge of special education policy among the professors. The institution's responsibility to the students [SWDs]." Another professor, Robert said, "There is no room for anything less than accommodating students where they need to be

accommodated. And professors should realize this is not negotiable. It's a legal requirement to provide the accommodation."

Wendy confirmed:

There is pushback from some professors at Sand University. I would say we are legally bound to...you must provide accommodations. Those in higher ed, not familiar with IDEA, PL-94, 192 and all that, they don't know, and I think they don't feel the urgency of providing [accommodations to an SWD] or [faculty] feel that providing accommodations are optional.

Louise believed that providing accommodations to an SWD is optional, or rather, up to the faculty member's discretion whether they wish to provide the accommodations to the student.

Louise said:

When I provide accommodations, I'm mostly adhering to what the Office of Accessibility is recommending to me for accommodations. Faculty don't know that when we get those OSA letters, these are *recommendations* [emphasis added]. We [the faculty] can say, "This does not work for this exam or that class."

Louise shared that when she had SWDs in her classes, on average, she had been in contact (via e-mail/in-person/Zoom) with the OSA officers at least three times each week, throughout the semester.

Some participants believed that there was a choice as to whether they provide the accommodations to their SWDs, while other participants felt they had no choice and, therefore, were bound by law to provide all of the accommodations to avoid legal trouble. This belief was confirmed by Margaret, who stated that a professor "can get sued if they don't provide the accommodation to the SWD."

Kim, a tenured French professor, spoke of the law and stated:

I'd say, it's a student's legal right, so you're in violation of the law, as far as I understand it. But that [the law] doesn't always convince people. I don't know what SWD students have as rights to their educational environment. It's kind of vague.

May made a poignant remark about pedagogy.

You have to remember, most professors, not all but most professors, weren't trained in education, period. They were trained in their field. They weren't trained in pedagogy and even less was there anything on pedagogy about special education or adaptive pedagogy.

The participant's responses revealed that faculty members often question a student with disabilities' diagnosis. Consequently, faculty at Sand University may be reluctant to adhere consistently to the university's policies as a result of trust in the diagnostic process. Professors may be suspicious of an SWD who requests accommodations for their class.

Three participants expressed that professors may question the professional diagnostic assessment for SWDs. Patty said, "Frustratingly, professors tend not to believe students." Furthermore, they remain skeptical of the diagnostic process of SWDs, as well as the decisions made by leading disability experts and health care professionals. Moreover, it posed discrepancies among the faculty of what constitutes equal and appropriate access for SWDs. Participants offered a variety of conflicting views. Even though faculty members abide by the OSA's rules, some faculty provide accommodations reluctantly. Louise was genuinely concerned about providing appropriate accommodations and was unyielding in her position. "There is some confusion or distrust of SWDs without physical disabilities, but students get accommodations for a lot of different things now. I've also had students who have chronic pain that often qualify for learning accommodations." Barbara stated that she believes that SWDs feel a sense of "entitlement like, well, you know, I get the service."

Some participants agreed that there is a wide range of diagnoses for SWDs and waived on what qualified a student to receive accommodations. May confirmed the belief that some "professors may blame the diagnosis as if it is not real. I think...there is a lack of trust in the system that exists, not necessarily at Sand U., but just the notion that people are diagnosed."

Participants questioned the severity of their student's disabilities and harbored the belief that if you cannot physically see the disability, then perhaps the student is being dishonest.

One participant openly shared how her perspective has changed since she began teaching in the early 2000s. In previous years, upon receiving a letter of accommodations from the former disability office on campus, Pauline shared how she felt about her SWD and providing accommodations. She said:

It's me just saying, "Let's try this [hands-on activities] for fun." And then noticing, "oh, my gosh, the leaders in this project [SWDs] are not the ones I expected to be the leaders." Then, it was more of a conviction. I'm not serving all my students because these [SWDs] if I didn't have this assignment, I would just say "They're 'C' students. He was not equipped for college or was maybe just a 'C' student." Not that I subconsciously, they're C students in that, but I wouldn't see them. I wasn't seeing them. So, it wasn't like I need to do this. It was more like, "Oh, Let's do this. It looks like fun." And then all of a sudden, I'm going, "Oh, no. What? I have not been serving all my students over the years. And then I became very deliberate in doing it [providing accommodations for SWDs]."

Sand University professors, such as Pauline, may have begun teaching a certain way when they only taught nondisabled students or students who they thought were nondisabled. However, throughout the years, she has had to alter her instruction when she began teaching SWDs. Pauline said, "The challenge for me was not having [knowledge and training] enough background information about disability, education, and disabilities [knowledge] in general." After she began instructing SWDs, she added various learning modalities to her lessons. She said: "Aha!" all the sudden, I realized I have not been serving all my students over the years, and then, I changed. Being an effective teacher is dependent on students understanding you. I asked myself, "Do you want to be right as a professor or do you want to be an effective teacher?" Another participant said one of her SWDs was "not smart, I think he failed." Both of these participants seemed embarrassed by these admissions, yet both of them said that they would not

respond this way now and that there is evidence of advancement for postsecondary SWDs in the higher education classroom.

Faculty members who distrust SWDs frequently allow that lack of trust to impede these student's academic progress in their classes. For instance, if the professor does not believe that the SWD has a true disability and an academic need, the professor may question whether their completed assignments are an accurate impression of the SWD's knowledge. Consequently, this situation may cause faculty to question an SWD's character. Patty responded to the notion of professor speculation about the integrity of an SWD, and said, "Frustratingly, professors tend not to believe students...like whatever excuse SWDs are giving, whether it's real or not." When faculty question a student's integrity, it damages the relationship between the faculty member in the SWD and leads to a restriction of access to the course.

Several participants remained generous in offering SWDs accommodations. According to participant responses, if a student requests an accommodation, such as extra time on a test, they should just receive the accommodation. Ethan said, "If the SWDs comes to you informally with a request for an accommodation, you (should) take their word that they have a disability or need." Joe said, "I've always given the students [SWDs] the benefit of the doubt. I have never questioned a disability or that I should be doing it" (providing accommodations.) Professors, such as Patty corroborated this by stating:

I think also just making things accessible. I know some of my colleagues really just question, "Do they really need extra time?" Like, well, yes. If someone says they need extra help, they need extra help end of the statement. We're done.

Growing and changing, while developing new teaching strategies, may be difficult. However, to provide equal access to all students, the professors at Sand University have come to crossroads and, in general, they have opted to serve all students. The UDL was mentioned by

more than half of the participants as a necessary component of higher education pedagogy. These principles foster inclusion and inherently allow equal access to education. Even though Sand University offers training in UDL, the training is optional. Additionally, after the initial new faculty orientation, faculty tend to use their time and energy on their research projects and instructional practices, rather than attending professional development. However, Joe, who has taught at Sand University for 5 years, has attended training on UDL strategies. He reported that he gained a new perspective on his current instruction. He said, “You (should) just do it, make the necessary accommodations for all students, and not worry about whether there were students with disabilities” in his classes. But this professor admitted, “I haven’t been as good as I should be in that area” (of implementing newly learned strategies such as UDL.) When the training recommended that professors use closed captioning, he responded, “I don’t have closed captioning on my videos. I find it a little bit distracting sometimes if you don’t really have to do it” (provide the accommodation). Even though UDL is widely known at many universities, it is still not routinely used by many professors. This could be the result of a lack of knowledge of UDL strategies or lack of motivation to change instruction and implement new teaching strategies.

The participants in this study had a wide range of tenure status. Years of service at Sand University as a faculty member ranged from 5 years through 30 years as a faculty member. Todd, a veteran professor, offered a valuable historical perspective of teaching an SWD, and of the disability services offered at Sand University in 1988.

Upon speaking with Todd, it was evident that inclusion and equal access to education for SWDs in higher education is a guiding principle and impacted his life in academia. As a language professor, Todd was assigned the role of advocate to a student with a disability. Todd

was charged with this responsibility by the institution. Initially, since Todd lacked any knowledge or training in special education, before devising a plan to teach the SWD, Todd reached out to the disability officer at the time. Todd stated:

I'm thinking of one particular student that I worked with. And I think that's the reason that I became his advocate because he [SWD] really didn't have a core of people to support him. As far as I recall, I worked with one [disability-services] person for all the campus. And so, we sat down and tried to work out a curriculum that would reflect having the same experience as anyone else, but we would be sensitive to what he could do and to what their [SWDs] needs were. I tried to understand what was happening with the student with disability, and honestly, we struggled with it.

At times, Todd challenged the academic standards and ethics of the university. He said:

We did not have a planned program to deal with disabilities. So, often if you had a disability, you were just exempt from taking that course. It would have been so much easier for the faculty [and academic officers] to say [that the SWD] "You're exempt from this. You don't have to take this course." But we [Todd and the disability officer] didn't feel that was fair either because we wanted him [SWD] to have this experience. We felt you need to keep them [SWDs] in the mainstream, so that they can have the same college experience.

Upon analyzing each of the 14 participant's oral responses of access, evidence appears to show that professors who had completed more training exhibit the skills necessary to provide academic accommodations to SWDs. The term Access overlapped continuously among the 14 selected faculty members. However, even with their variances, the participants concur that there is still much to learn about teaching postsecondary SWDs. Finally, they acknowledge that there is a deficiency in the area of accessibility training at the higher-education level.

Theme 2: Participants' Perceptions of and Experiences with Confidentiality

When a professor is privileged to have information about an SWD, maintaining the confidentiality of this student demonstrates the professor's compliance and may provide an opportunity to build a strong faculty/student relationship. The term, Confidentiality (per The Definitions of Terms in Chapter 1) reflects the IDEA that requires procedures to provide a FAPE

for all children with disabilities and safeguards prohibiting the disclosure of any personally identifiable information. Clear guidelines have been set forth for public schools when collecting, storing, releasing, or destroying personally identifiable information on students.

The word, confidentiality was repeated among many participants when they described interactions with SWDs. Supporting students and their confidentiality is an inherent part of this educational establishment; therefore, many of the respondents adopted the stance that student information of their diagnosis belongs to the student. Faculty described the procedures of having a student with a disability in their classes. Initially, SWDs are referred to the OSA to receive campus services. It is the students' decision to self-disclose their disabilities to receive services and accommodations for their academic programs of study. Once the student has voluntarily self-disclosed, it is the institution's responsibility to ensure the privacy and security of each student. Ethical and moral obligations fall on the professors within the institution.

In the past when students had required accommodations, it was up to the student to approach the faculty member, self-disclose their disability, and politely request the accommodations that they needed. Robert communicated his understanding that SWDs are in a vulnerable position, particularly when faced with the daunting task of self-disclosing their disability to a person in a position of power, such as a faculty member. Robert said that when an SWD activates their accommodations at the OSA:

I think 10 years ago, a lot of students who had to, on their own, defend themselves and defend the reason for their needs, for accommodations, individually with every single professor. And that was really unfair for the students. Now, though, that's...that's taken out of their hands. They don't...they don't have to worry about that, they don't have to put themselves into the really vulnerable position of telling their professors very personal things about themselves, especially like, at the very beginning of the semester. And so, it's just communicated to the professor when you have a legal obligation to provide these accommodations.

The power imbalance between the faculty and SWD was raised as a concern by Robert. In the past 10 years at Sand University, before reshaping the OSA, SWDs requested their accommodations directly from each college professor. This standard practice has been illuminated at many colleges as a result of increased vulnerability on the part of the student and the repercussions. Aside from confidentiality issues, the student-professor power dynamic had been problematic for many SWDs, especially 10 years ago. An SWD should not have to be put in a position where they are uncertain of their rights to receive their necessary academic accommodations (Robert). Moreover, teenagers with disabilities “should not have to request accommodations from tenured faculty from whom they intend to receive a grade” (Robert).

May explained during her interview that as a result of concerns such as the SWD/faculty power dynamic, the campus Disability Services Officers, now the OSA, have often had to intervene when problems occurred between faculty and SWDs. Robert addressed the issue of student vulnerability, by stating, “The OSA reduces the vulnerability of SWDs asking for accommodations.” Currently, the process of informing faculty is the responsibility of the OSA, rather than the student. Robert feels that since the OSA handles the confidentiality aspect of this process, it protects the student from self-disclosing their diagnosis to the professors and relieves the SWD from this burden.

Some of the participants rely on the function of the OSA. Currently, the OSA has the task of receiving SWDs’ referrals and diagnostic information. They are the official liaison between the faculty and the SWD. Before 2010, the OSA was existent under a different title: Disability Services (DS). However, in recent years, it has become more acceptable to refer to this particular office and its services as Accessibility Services, as opposed to using a derogatory term, disability.

The OSA has the responsibility of notifying faculty if there is an SWD in their class, which may minimize or may even eliminate the need for SWDs to notify faculty about their disability. Furthermore, as Robert stated, since the SWD plays less of a role in notifying the faculty member of their disability and requesting services, SWD vulnerability becomes less of an issue. The OSA's role for both SWDs and faculty has proved necessary in recent years. Faculty seem to rely on the OSA to support them when they are unsure of how to provide accommodations. Louise stated that in the spring of 2020, she contacted the OSA every day for two weeks for assistance with one of her SWDs. Faculty, such as Louise, may need more resources and guidance, particularly if they have no experience teaching SWDs.

Confidentiality is one element of this university that is consistent among the faculty. The integrity of this faculty is evident as they support and honor student's privacy. More than half of the participants responded that even though they were not privy to know the exact diagnosis of the SWD, they were competent in providing the classroom and needed academic accommodations. Participants, such as Elizabeth, said, Faculty "don't always know what the disability is. You know the accommodations, not the disability." Margaret summarized the feeling among all of the participants, when she stated, "When we get the letters [from the OSA] about the students, about giving them extra adjustments, they don't tell us their diagnosis. And the student doesn't have to tell us their diagnosis." Privacy of the student demonstrates the university's ethics. Another faculty member, Margaret added, "I find out they have a disability, but I don't really get any details on it. And I don't find out any details on their disability because that's confidential information." None of the professors demonstrated any need to know a student's diagnosis.

As a result of the OSA process, many professors feel that they are left in the dark about their SWDs. Some faculty members said that they don't receive much about their student's diagnosis. More than half of the faculty members believe that they would be able to serve better their students if they did know the diagnosis. Becky said, "On the first day, I give a questionnaire. I leave a question about 'Is there anything else that I need to know about you or your learning?' Sometimes a student will self-identify."

Many of the professors in this study were familiar with UDL, which promotes anonymity among all students. Robert shared a student of a colleague. He said:

There was one student who wanted to use a computer before everybody started using computers in class. By having the one student use the computer in the class, it would "shine a light on him" and single him out and the professor didn't want to do that and have them singled out, so the professor said every student could bring computers.

By embracing equal access to all of the students in his class, this professor eliminated the exposure of a student's disability.

Another professor shared a story of a student with a speech impairment who would be singled out in his class if this student had to speak among his peers. "When so many others are going to be responding orally, maybe he can't. And if this student does, it's not going to be comparable with the way that somebody else would respond, so that singles him out."

Ultimately, the professor decided to offer alternative ways for this student to respond to course material, computers, forums, etc.

Postsecondary SWDs want to fit in with their nondisabled peers; they will go to great lengths to conceal their disabilities. Most of the professors agreed, though, that although the SWD may opt to keep their disability confidential, sometimes it can be beneficial for an SWD to self-disclose. When a student with disabilities self-discloses their disability, there may be a sense of relief and acceptance. Kim reported that her niece has a seizure disorder. When the professor,

Kim, discussed her niece's seizure disorder, a student in her class felt comfortable enough to self-disclose to her. "Very early in my career, a student who had a seizure disorder told me this [disability], and I mentioned my niece [who also has the same disability], so she self-disclosed." Barbara had a similar experience. One of the students in her class had kept her disability confidential at the beginning of the semester. However, this student self-disclosed to the class at some point. "The next time we had class, she told the class what was going on [with her disability]. You know, like it empowered her. Once I knew about her disability, it was okay. The other students knew." Self-disclosure may be appropriate in some settings that are determined by the person with the disability.

However, some faculty voiced concerns about the appropriateness of self-disclosure. Barbara and Louise brought up a concern that none of the other professors addressed during the faculty interviews. Disclosing a disability in a school setting can allow the student to receive accommodations. However, in a real-life work setting, adults with disabilities do not self-disclose their disabilities to their employers once they have graduated from college. Two professors raised this concern. Barbara said, "You may have to learn these things [disabilities] but, it's about learning to live life with that, and employers aren't going to care whether or not you have a disability."

Louise raised a concern about receiving accommodations in college and transferring these skills to postgraduation professions. Louise said:

I don't want to set SWDs up for a profession that they will feel like a constant failure in, because professions just have inherent time constrictions to them. You can't be in an op-room and ask for extra time to do a procedure.

Certain educational contexts, such as a standardized exam during college, are quite different than a real-life work setting, where the material has already been learned and is applied.

This conflict of self-disclosure beyond school settings has been and continues to be, addressed, and examined by educational professionals. In an academic higher education setting that serves postsecondary SWDs, it is widely known among faculty and other university officers that confidentiality is valued and expected.

Theme 3: Participants' Perceptions of and Experiences with Academic Rigor

Academic rigor is defined as the level at which students are challenged to think, learn, and grow to advance to a new level; setting and enforcing high expectations and standards for academic performance (Draeger et al., 2013).

Study participants named academic rigor as a source of motivating or deterring SWDs from achieving academic success in higher education. Even though the work may be challenging initially for a student, SWDs' success is often driven by the effort that they are willing to put out in studies (Elizabeth). The main concern for educators is whether SWDs are able to succeed in a program comparable to their nondisabled peers (Joe). Furthermore, the question lingers: Are they able to accomplish the tasks of the program?

Providing equal accommodations to all students was raised as a main concern. Barbara shared how she had an SWD who failed her course. "I think at some point there's nothing I can do." Barbara provided the same accommodations to all of her students. Participants raised questions about changing the curriculum and providing academic rigor to all students. Wendy stated that there seems to be resistance among professors, specifically at Sand University, about altering the curriculum for students with disabilities. Wendy stated:

There is quite honestly, a lot of resistance. I've been...in terms of not going to read them [SWDs] the questions or "I'm not going to make it easier for them everywhere." That's not fair to the other students. And I realize that you know, Sand University actually came under fire for not providing the supports that they need. And we've had the Office of Student Accessibility come in and say, "no, you need to provide these supports." And so

there...there is pushback from some professors. I'm just not one of them. I would say we are legally bound to number one. If that helps. You must, it's not optional.

Margaret experienced how not knowing about disability and special education impacted their perception of an SWD. Margaret said, "When a student requested double-time for an exam, I was initially very irritated about it because I was like, 'Maybe they just don't have what it takes to do this material, learn this stuff.'" This participant often questioned the SWD's ability to succeed in academic-related tasks.

Joe questioned the academic integrity of providing accommodations to SWDs and the issue of reducing the institution's academic rigor. "I don't like to baby the students." Yet, Wendy shared how changing a style of teaching increases academic rigor in higher education. Wendy said, "You're not watering down the curriculum nor helping them. We need to spice it up, not water it down, so, it just means that you need to give the SWD multiple access points, but not watered down."

The concept of various learning modalities was addressed by more than half of the participants. Patty argued against standardized testing in higher education. "Why do we need timed tests? Closed book tests?" May agreed and discussed the importance of using various learning modalities. "We do a lot of pair groups and activities. They get to know their peers, SWDs become proactive and engaged."

Pauline shared about the importance of effective pedagogy, along with various learning modalities. There are multiple ways of teaching, and no matter how you instruct, what matters is that your students learn. "Ultimately, you can't say you're a teacher if your students don't learn. Do you want to be a professor or a teacher?" Kim added to this notion of solid pedagogy. "It's really our job as an academic institution to provide a learning environment where students are able to learn, where SWDs can achieve the student learning outcomes."

As professors are developing different learning strategies to reach all of their students, including SWDs, more students will have the ability to graduate with a Bachelor's degree. Based on the data, most participants agreed that offering material with high academic rigor, comparable with other students' level of rigor, is needed to engage SWDs and to enhance the program for these students. Offering academic accommodations to SWDs is not reducing the quality of the content, nor is it decreasing the academic rigor of the program. To contrast this stance, the university faculty are setting an appropriate academic goal that inspires SWDs to demonstrate perseverance.

SWDs will still require the accommodations in forms such as extra time or repetition, explaining something differently, or getting assistance from a peer. Yet the academic standard should not be lowered, hindering the expectations of the student, and challenging the academic integrity of the institution.

Postsecondary SWDs may continue to need assistance as they progress in school. However, they should not be deterred, but rather encouraged to pursue any level of higher education. For they may overcome any academic challenge with which they are faced. Ethan shared an example of a colleague with dyslexia. When asked whether postsecondary students with disabilities could go on to earn further degrees, such as Ed.D.s and Ph.D.s, both May and Ethan agreed that it was possible.

To illustrate this perception, Ethan shared the story of a woman with dyslexia who earned her Ph.D. He stated:

Yeah, I have a colleague in my graduate program who just defended maybe last week or two weeks ago. She's dyslexic. So, yeah, she just finished. It took her eight years to finish. She needed extra time. I know classwork was often time a struggle, but she made it. She did it and she defended her dissertation. I think it's [earning a Ph.D.] possible and I've seen it happen!

May encourages SWDs to continue with academic programs and receive advanced degrees. She affirmed:

Absolutely. SWDs absolutely could [receive advanced degrees]. We have students [SWDs] in law school doing this now, right? I mean, if you can get a law degree, you can get a Ph.D. with disabilities. I want them to go into the field of education. I want SWDs to make careers and I'd love them to come back and be an alum who's engaged and active and says, "Here's what helped me." For them to be a mentor. We have an Alum mentor program, for SWDs to come back and mentor and say, "You can do this. You can do this, and here's how I did it."

Several of the participants demonstrated how their relationships with SWDs impacted these students' lives. Their stories communicated the importance of giving postsecondary SWDs a voice and the opportunity that they deserve a higher education. Furthermore, by enhancing their knowledge and humility, faculty reasonably believe they empower SWDs and influence them to become better students.

Theme 4: Participants' Perceptions of and Experiences with Faculty/SWD Relationships

Higher education faculty members draw upon their professional knowledge and teaching experience to build educational relationships with their students. Essentially, these relationships are particularly important for students experiencing academic difficulties (DuPaul, Pinho, et al., 2017). This definition of faculty/SWD relationships requires an explanation rather than a concise description. The researcher defines the term Faculty/SWD relationship as fostering and mentoring through ethical means, nurture, and enhance the advancement and pursuit of knowledge (Barnard-Brak et al., 2010). According to Barnard-Brak et al. (2010), SWDs have reported dissatisfaction with the level of knowledge and understanding on the part of faculty and administrators regarding their disabilities and faculty attitudes toward them. These attitudes are consistent among faculty and hinder the relationships between faculty and their SWDs. According to this literature, SWDs tend to be fragile in the beginning stages of the relationship

with faculty and fearful of the stigma attached to disclosing their disabilities. Four study participants, Margaret, Pauline, Barbara, and Louise admitted that they had previously assigned a lower grade to an SWD based on their understanding and beliefs about disabilities. As a result of the stigma attached with having a disability, SWDs may refrain from registering for academic assistance, the OSA services, and endure the consequences of withholding this pertinent information (Barnard-Brak et al., 2010). These consequences may include departing from college and dropping out of their programs.

A number of study participants stressed the importance of a faculty member's attitude. Lombardi et al. (2013) found evidence that supported that faculty attitudes toward students with disabilities and the accommodations that they provide them can be improved by providing faculty with disability-related training based on UDL principles. These data are consistent with the study participants' responses regarding faculty relationships and further training.

In this study, the experiences and perceptions of the participants differed from each other on the theme of faculty/SWD relationships. Some respondents answered the questions from the perspective of a professor and shared stories about supporting their SWDs in their classes, while other participants, who self-disclosed a disability, reverted to past experiences about themselves as the SWD. Both perspectives offer value to this study since they reflect these participants' concept of relationships with SWDs. This section is organized in two parts: first, are the faculty responses of respondents as faculty members of Sand University, and second, are those stories of participants who self-disclosed their disabilities during the interviews.

As university professors, participants agreed that their SWDs' success in their classes often hinged on their relationship. A strong faculty-student relationship starts with the faculty member's attitude toward that student. Joe said, "I think that's [faculty attitude] probably the

most important thing, that professor's attitude. I mean, you have to have an attitude of 'Hey, these are disabilities that exist, and I've got to be sensitive to them.'" A faculty member's attitude has the power to influence everything for a student in a semester, and even in their entire academic program. Becky added, "I think the faculty attitude affects just about everything you do in the classroom." A faculty member's attitude toward their students, particularly those with disabilities, demonstrates their integrity.

According to the participants' responses, faculty who have had pedagogy courses fared better during their interviews. Ethan is an early career faculty member, with only 6 years as a professor, yet he has a strong, solid background in pedagogy. Ethan's knowledge of pedagogy is evident by his confidence in his answers and reflective of his learned educational theory and concepts. For example, he feels that the small class size and personal relationships enhance the learning of all of the students at Sand University. This is based on his training and experience as a teacher.

Ethan expressed how deeply he felt that his SWDs' academic success is directly linked to the faculty-student relationship. Ethan stated:

I think the faculty-SWD relationship is really important. I think a crucial part of the faculty-student relationship is that just understanding that not everyone's going to learn at the same pace and that's okay. Teacher-student dyad is so crucial to understanding everything, including accommodations, including how students learn better, one way or another.

The combination of formal teacher training in pedagogy and experience teaching SWDs in the classroom ultimately sharpens faculty members' ability to teach effectively all students.

Faculty members who show respect to SWDs have a greater chance of developing a positive relationship with them (DuPaul, Pinho, et al., 2017). Robert stated that by showing respect and honoring student confidentiality, faculty members are more likely to develop positive

relationships with them. Robert stated, “There are subtle things that professors can do to make it easier for students to be successful.” The study participants expressed that faculty have the ability to develop teaching and assessment strategies to ensure that each of their students are successful. Todd shared the sentiment of student individuality and how faculty can alter their assessment strategies. Todd shared:

Everyone that you teach is different. Other professors might say, “I can’t have a student in my class who can’t respond like everyone else.” And I said, “Well that’s not true.” You can because there are different ways to evaluate students.

Todd’s comments reflect his understanding of embracing various learning modalities. Pauline stated that being an effective teacher and reaching the students strengthens faculty members’ personal relationships with students. “That’s kind of what happened with me. I’m like, ‘Oh, the students like me. They like this. They learn.’” Effective faculty members have different ways of establishing relationships with their students. Ultimately, the students’ success reflects faculty members’ success as teachers.

One of the participants, Kim, had an experience where she was able to connect a personal family member’s disability with a student in her class. This event occurred more than 10 years ago, before there were formal trainings of students with disabilities. Kim shared:

I have...a niece with a very debilitating seizure disorder, but she’s nonverbal. She’s visually impaired. And she’s 16 years old, but cognitively, she’s about at the level of a 6- to 9-month-old. Even before there was a lot of knowledge about academic accommodations, early on in my career, I had a student who had a seizure disorder. She had told me this, and I mentioned my niece to this student, so she self-disclosed. And then, she had an episode, and so this student’s mother called me, which normally a professor wouldn’t have a parent calling you. But I knew about that student [and her seizure disorder], and so I didn’t mind, saying to her mother, “Of course.” And tell her mother, “Don’t worry. Take the exam when you need to take the exam. We’ll work it out.”

Since Kim has a close family member with a disability, this relationship influenced the decisions she made in the classroom. This connection with her niece affected her so much that

she felt compassion toward an SWD in her classroom. Furthermore, this personal connection strengthened Kim's bond with the SWD, and ultimately allowed her to be successful in the academic setting.

Participants in this case study are similar in that they are all higher education faculty members with advanced degrees who teach at Sand University. However, Barbara and Patty have had different educational experiences, rather than a clear-cut, linear path to higher education. Barbara and Patty self-disclosed their disabilities during their interviews. In sharing their stories, they stepped into the role of an SWD rather than a faculty member of an SWD.

During school, Barbara's strong relationship with her parents and their unwavering support pushed her to succeed. Based on her own school experiences and needing assistance in academic settings, Barbara reflected and shared, "The relationship between the student and faculty member is absolutely tremendous and necessary." Barbara retold her undergraduate college experience and having dyslexia and having never received accommodations. She said:

To some extent, I have dyslexia. I mean, it was a problem in my early education...but it's about learning how to live life with that. And that your employers aren't going to care that you have a disability. What how are you going to learn in these four years? To compensate. What are you going to do? Yeah. I mean, it was tough [in school]. I had a lot of special classes, but it wasn't paid by the state back then. My parents did all that. My parents paid for tutoring for four years, because I wouldn't have graduated from high school because I had a fourth-grade spelling level. I tried to get other people to type my papers for me. I guess it was a writing problem. I mean, nowadays you ask for help, spell check, Grammarly. My original degrees, undergrad and Master's are in geology. It does not necessarily mean you overcome it, the disability. It's how do you learn the skills you need to survive.

Barbara's experience as a student with a disability raised her expectations of other postsecondary SWDs. As a result of her grit and determination, Barbara overcame her previous academic obstacles during her postsecondary years, and transferred this growth into her work life, where she flourished for 30 years. Now, as a new professor, her experience in the business

world, and as an adult with dyslexia, she uses her knowledge and life experience to impact a new generation of business leaders, including those with disabilities.

Another participant in this study, Patty self-disclosed that she had a disability, yet refrained from sharing her specific diagnosis. In her experience, Patty added that when she needed accommodations in college, her needs were met with guidance of her faculty mentor. It was through this relationship that she was motivated to remain in her college program, overcome her challenges, and ultimately graduate.

Yeah, I'm not sure I knew anyone who had any accommodations. There were a couple times where the program that I was in, I would disclose a mental health [disorder]...and my mentor worked with me basically, so that I could stay in the program. But it was very personal. I never got any [accommodations] for myself. You know, when I was like, "I think I'm going to drop out." He [Patty's faculty mentor] said, "Let's not do that. What do you need to do to succeed?" So, there was no one in administration. There is no one in disability services. No one else involved. It was just like, he could have I, he could have screwed me over and been like, "Well, never mind. I take it all back." But he didn't. I think relationships are super important for retention.

Participants in this study acknowledged the importance of forming connections and building trusting teacher-student relationships. Often SWDs seek authentic mentorship, they strive for guidance, comradery, and community in an academic setting, and long for the impact of a positive faculty-student relationship. By establishing trust and forming these intricate relationships, SWDs may develop communication skills, increase their academic ability, and enhance their growth mindset. This relationship may benefit faculty members as well since it is likely to increase their understanding of teaching diverse populations while developing their self-efficacy as a professor.

Theme 5: Participants' Perceptions of and Experiences with Culture

Sand University attracts both students and faculty that reflect its culture. Sand University is a small, private Christian university, and, therefore, is an organization that emphasizes moral

behavior and ethical practices and prioritizes the importance a personal conduct. These beliefs are reflected by the staff that it employs and in the students this institution accepts.

Sand University is an institutional organization; therefore, the researcher chose to define the term culture, as previously referenced in the Definition of Terms in Chapter 1, as this term relates to this case study and to this specific group of individuals, higher education faculty. The term culture is defined as the shared assumptions of individuals participating in an organization, identified through stories, special language, norms, institutional ideology, and attitudes that emerge from the individual or organizational behavior, and it is an organizational web bound by a structure (Tierney, 1988). The reputation of Sand University exceeds that of a nationally esteemed university, one that attracts high-quality students and faculty, and, therefore, has certain expectations of both. Consequently, the leaders of this institution must maintain this high standard. Occasionally, there are policy changes within this organization that directly impact its faculty and students. Even though there is a facade that these organizational and cultural changes may seamlessly occur, this is not always the case. There may be disagreements about the implementation and enforcement of policies regarding students with disabilities.

Participants of this study revealed that there is a lack of trust in disability policies on a national level, as well as at this particular site. Participants questioned the policies pertaining to postsecondary SWDs and the offices that enforce these campus policies. Some study participants knew about the special education law, the ADA, and how it applies to education, yet none of them knew that it was written on the Sand University website. Additionally, none of the participants were familiar with the HEOA, passed in 2008, which outlines appropriate policy implementation for postsecondary SWD. In spite of these issues, participants attested to the warm culture, small class size, and homelike atmosphere at Sand University.

Some participants questioned the validity of the university's written procedures, faculty training, and challenged the interpretation of the national laws. Elizabeth demonstrated understanding of faculty at this institution when she stated her opinion of how faculty respond when they have SWDs in their classes and when they have to provide accommodations.

Elizabeth stated:

The institution has a responsibility to the students. There should be knowledge of special education policy among professors. Faculty should have familiarity with disability law as it relates to higher ed. Faculty understand the process of OSA in order to create accommodations or design accommodations to fit the needs of the student. Professors at Sand University reach out to the OSA and the website on an anecdotal basis. I think the faculty don't actively look for training.

Elizabeth recognized the importance of knowledge of special education and training in this area with the purpose of serving the students at this institution. Furthermore, Elizabeth shared her belief that there is a disconnect between the OSA and faculty that impacts the student's education. There is resistance among faculty to provide accommodations to this institution's SWDs.

The notion of resistance among faculty was echoed by Wendy, who expressed her viewpoint that not all faculty adequately support students with disabilities at this university.

Wendy stated:

You're touching on a very sensitive issue to me because there's so many professors who are super smart in their field, but they're not good teachers, quite honestly. There is a lot of resistance to providing accommodations in terms of "not going to read the questions or I'm not going to make it easier on them everywhere. That's not fair to other students." Sand University came under fire for not providing the supports that they need to...so the OSA came in to say, "No, you do need to provide these supports." There is pushback from some professors so I would say we are legally bound to...you must, it's not optional, you must provide support for them [SWDs].

Study participant Robery reported that there seems to be less resistance among professors to provide accommodations as a result of more structure and mandated guidelines, specifically presented to professors from the campus OSA. He stated:

I think, 10 years ago, I think it was a different situation. I think there were a lot of faculty members who were very resistant and a lot of students who had to, on their own, defend themselves and defend the reason for needs, for accommodations individually with every single professor. And that was really unfair for the students.

The need for faculty training is a direct focus of this study, particularly training in the area of special education or disability studies for higher education faculty members. Therefore, the researcher asked each participant their perspective regarding the need for faculty training at Sand University. Eleven participants' viewpoints regarding the need for increased faculty training at Sand University are detailed. Explanations of each participant's viewpoints ensue.

- Elizabeth: If you think about a typical faculty member, I think that they don't actively look for training or read case law upon hire.
- Wendy: Some Ph.D.s may not have had one pedagogy course. Though you're smart, you're not a very good teacher sometimes. I think Sand University needs to have classes and pedagogy, but they need to know the law around the student, and there are the interventions and accommodations that faculty are supposed to offer.
- Margaret: Never been to a formal training for students with disabilities.
- Becky: That doesn't mean every faculty member is doing well with it or that the institution couldn't be better.
- Robert: I think given the reality that there are going to be some [faculty] who will not be responsive [to training], I think it's good for us to have OSA to make sure the students don't fall through the cracks for those professors.
- Todd: Faculty need more training, for sure.
- Pauline: Student evaluations change the university.
- Kim: I don't know what SWD students have as rights to their educational environment. It's kind of vague. By the time you're on your second year and third

year on faculty, so much happens that I don't really recall having it [faculty training] been brought up again.

- Barbara: Just so that we have time to learn from one another. This topic [disability] has never come up.
- Joe: Disability studies is still a relatively new topic for this university.
- Ethan: More formal training. Make it a mandatory training as a part of their contract.
- Louise: Within each division at the university there should be an expert someone who is trained in disability studies or pedagogy to answer questions about students with disabilities a go to person besides the OSA.

To summarize the participant's responses, there is an overall feeling that there is not enough quality faculty training offered and that disability topics are not even interspersed.

Through these responses, the participant's made it evident that even though they have all taught SWDs, they may not have always known what actions to take to implement the appropriate accommodations. Faculty training may not be feasible or accessible, and, therefore, the function of the OSA is vital to faculty who teach SWDs. Participants, such as Pauline, believe that to change faculty and their training, students need to voice their opinions through university course evaluations. Course evaluations influence officers of the university and their decisions.

Even though only other participants recognized the great need for training, and increased pedagogy, May was the only participant in this study who distinguished not only the need for pedagogy in higher education, but specifically, the need for training in special education for higher education faculty members.

Someone from OSA comes and speaks to the new faculty, but it's a general. It could be years before faculty have someone [SWD] in their class. It could be years before they have someone in the class who might need that accommodation. Sand University should have a faculty conference once a year with all of the faculty of the school. You have to remember, most professors, not all but most professors weren't trained in education, period. They were trained in their field. They weren't trained in pedagogy and even less was there anything on pedagogy about *special education* or *adaptive pedagogy* [emphasis added].

The study participants were very practical in their approach when offering specific suggestions and recommendations for the improvement of training at Sand University. However, Patty had a more utopian vision for accommodations in higher education; therefore, the researcher did not include her in this list but instead highlighted her entire statement. Patty commented:

We should not need disability services or OSA or whatever. We should make all of our classes accessible so that we're giving accommodations just flat out. Why do we use timed tests? Why do we use, like closed-book tests? Like, this is ridiculous. I get if you need a noise-free place like that distraction-free. That's fair. But we shouldn't need OSA because we should be designing classes that are accessible in their very design. They (universities/colleges) should have accessible due dates, flexible due dates. They should have different ways of showing what they've learned. We shouldn't just be testing. We should be allowing...you can show me what you've learned without taking a test. Yes, I think we desperately need better accommodations, but we shouldn't need them because we should be accommodating everyone.

An aspect of this research that is unparalleled with other studies written about SWDs is that it addresses the need for high school SWDs who receive accommodations to be able to travel or transfer their accommodations as they are written in their current IEPs. Ideally, postsecondary SWDs would enter college and receive the same necessary accommodations as they had received during their high school placement. Nine of the 14 of the study participants (65%) believe that IEPs should travel or carry over to higher education settings. Ethan spoke candidly when he shared:

There would be more information for the OSA and for the university. The researcher considered that the officers of the university would be privy to an SWD's IEP but not faculty members as they would not read their SWD's IEP for confidentiality reasons.

The participants who voiced their opinions unfavorably about adopting IEPs in college shared their reasons for their hesitation. Their answers reflected SWDs' privacy in higher education or lack of knowledge about disability studies. Margaret stated, "What would that look like in college?" Currently, there is no standard for IEPs in college. Even though faculty in higher

education have advanced degrees, their degrees may not necessarily be in the field of pedagogy, special education, or adaptive pedagogy. Therefore, this section addresses the need for further faculty training to benefit not only the students of this institution, but its faculty as well.

Theme 6: Participants' Perceptions of and Experiences with Compassion/Sensitivity

Each of the subjects of this case study demonstrated a level of compassion and sensitivity toward SWDs and expressed their personal viewpoints and described their connections with them. The climate at Sand University is one that embraces compassion and sensitivity. Consequently, there is vivid evidence of these in the responses of each of the participants. Faculty are drawn to Sand University as a result of the warmth of this community. The faculty's compassion and sensitivity are what fuel the connections, not only with SWDs but with all students at Sand University.

During their interviews, study participants explained how these traits, compassion, and sensitivity are directly related to adaptive pedagogy, and guide their instruction and classroom practice. Furthermore, compassion and sensitivity increase these faculty members' self-efficacy and their understanding of SWDs. By developing sensitivity toward SWDs, the study participants believe that higher education faculty can improve their knowledge of SWDs, learn new teaching strategies, and embrace institutional initiatives designed to reduce barriers to learning.

Participants demonstrated that they have greater compassion and sensitivity toward SWDs by exploring different learning modalities, utilizing UDL, and practicing inclusive behavior, among other things. Robert shared, "If a class is just taught in one single modality, that's going to make some students feel included, but not other students." Participants, such as Becky feel that their growth as educators happened as a result of teaching SWDs. Becky stated,

“I had a student who needed to have a device, so that [experience] kind of reshaped the way I was thinking about technology.”

Participants such as Becky were influenced to change their instruction because there was a need of an SWD in their classes, whereas Pauline has been impacted personally, as her daughter has Attention Deficit Disorder. Pauline said:

One of the main ways that I had to change my instruction was through assessment, giving quiet room, time and a half, but I think it should go beyond that. I’m influenced by the fact that one of my own children have Attention Deficit Disorder. She has a learning disability. Oftentimes, we teach only that way [one way]. So, we’re only teaching the students like us [nondisabled peers]. And I’m always trying to say, “OK, most people are not like me, try to mix it up.” All of a sudden, I realized I have not been serving all my students over the years, and then, I changed.

Often a person’s decision in the moment reveals their compassion and sensitivity toward others. Patty provided an example of an instance with her SWD in her office hours. Patty explained how she responded in a more compassionate manner.

I had a student in one of my sections who was deaf. She did not use an ASL interpreter, though. She used a stenographer who’s writing would go to her computer so she could see...basically closed captioning of live lectures. When she’d come to office hours, it took me a second to realize it was the same student that I saw using those captioning. At one point, I realized I had turned away from her as I was explaining something. I’m like, “Oh, she’s clearly reading my lips and I need to make sure I face her.”

Patty realized in the moment that she needed to adapt her perspective and understanding to accommodate her student with a disability. Participants, such as May, have demonstrated that faculty have integrity, and hope to understand and provide the accommodations necessary for SWDs. Furthermore, some faculty truly wish to comply with the mandated policies and procedures but may not have the resources and information that they require to execute the appropriate accommodation. May shared, “Faculty don’t mind providing the accommodations given that they have enough time to provide them.”

Several participants attested that faculty require further training regardless of the stage of their careers as professors. Becky acknowledged that most of the faculty at Sand University have a good moral compass and high expectations of others. Even though they strive to support all students on campus and in their programs, there is a need for professional development. Becky said, “We want students to feel like they are known, they are cared for, and they are welcomed as whole people. That doesn’t mean every faculty member is doing well with it or that the institution couldn’t be better.” Louise recommended for a liaison to be accessible to faculty within each division to support the need for disability training at Sand University. Louise said, “Within each division at the university, there should be an expert, or someone who is trained in disability studies, to answer questions about students with disabilities. A liaison; a ‘go-to’ person, besides the OSA.”

Some of the participants offered realistic strategies that could be implemented in the future at Sand University. Ethan stated:

I don’t think [Sand University] we do enough training for SWDs and accommodations, quite candidly. In my opinion, I think every single graduate of a Ph.D. program, where they are training people to go out into the academy, should have either a certificate or a two or three-class pedagogy requirement.

Joe noted how faculty at Sand University lack understanding and knowledge of what SWDs face because they have a disability. Joe stated, “There is a stigma with diversity. I think nowadays with disability, equity, and inclusion, it’s a problem. There hasn’t been enough sensitivity to students with disabilities in our society.” Joe addressed how the lack of disability knowledge is not only a concern at Sand University, or in higher education but rather, it is a national and global issue that continues to require attention.

Participants, such as Elizabeth, believe that when faculty adhere to the institution’s policies and understand the reasons for enforcing them, that faculty show greater compassion

toward SWDs. Elizabeth stated, “Faculty understand the process of OSA in order to create accommodations or design accommodations to fit the needs of the student.” Elizabeth had a very clear sense of serving all students and believed that it is through knowledge and understanding that faculty show greater compassion.

Todd demonstrated how inclusion with nondisabled peers is critical to an SWD’s success in higher education.

I’m thinking of one particular student that I worked with. The first thing I had to overcome was the curriculum. “What can this student actually do? How can he perform academically, and how can he really have a positive experience?” When so many other students are going to be responding orally, maybe he can’t, and if he does, it’s not going to be comparable with the way that somebody else would respond, so that singles him out.

Another variable that was evident through the participant interviews was that the reputation of Sand University is valued. As a result, faculty at this institution tend to conform to this expectation and uphold its reputation. This expectation can influence faculty members’ behavior at this site. Margaret stated, “We have a reputation for caring about our students. I have friends with disabilities as well. I notice things. I’m a lot more sensitive.” Margaret maintained that compassion and sensitivity are part of her being, and, therefore, this carries over into every aspect of her life, including her interactions with SWDs.

Compassion and sensitivity may be innate qualities, yet some faculty agree that these are traits that may be developed over time. Wendy is trained in pedagogy and employed at Sand University in this capacity. Consequently, she has come across many undergraduate students who train to be state educators. Early in her interview, Wendy stated, “So, I have a heart for teaching students with exceptionalities.” Her warmth and compassion show in that statement. Ethan has had previous experience working with adult SWDs, yet he said, “I think teaching SWDs helped build patience in me.” Some participants such as Wendy and Ethan demonstrated

having a growth mindset and a willingness to show compassion and sensitivity, and thus, are better educators.

Other participants' compassion, such as Pauline, Louise, and Kim, stems from having a close family relationship with a person with a disability, such as a child with a disability. Kim's compassion is a result of her strong relationship with her niece, who has a disability. Kim said:

I was always just really attuned to the fact that I wanted to be compassionate whenever I could when I teach. I did a directed study with one student, even though I wasn't credited for that, because he was still technically a student in my class, that I met with the student at another day and time when he was able to attend. So, I've always just been very flexible and when possible, I've always tried to extend my willingness to help.

As the participants' responses have shown, compassion and sensitivity are essential traits in cultivating relationships and nurturing students with disabilities. Compassion and sensitivity are especially necessary for educators of SWDs.

Comparison of the Emergent Themes

Several themes emerged in the literature review that were consistent with the data analysis. However, some themes varied with the data found in the literature depending on the specific needs of this site. The themes found in the data analysis were access, confidentiality, academic rigor, faculty dash students with disabilities relationship, culture, and compassion and sensitivity. These themes differed from the themes found in the literature. Consistent themes that were noted in both the literature review and the data of the study. Student and faculty interaction were consistent with DuPaul, Pinho, et al. (2017). Furthermore, positive faculty attitudes were consistent with Lombardi et al. (2011). According to Cawthon and Cole (2010) faculty had positive perceptions about students with disabilities, and therefore, willing to support their SWDs. Acquiring the skills necessary to implement appropriate teaching strategies and understanding the university process of supporting SWDs was prevalent.

Daly-Cano et al., (2015) uncovered the faculty were conflicted with their beliefs about providing reasonable accommodations. This was consistent with the study participants' responses as some participants felt that if SWDs needed an accommodation or support, it should just be provided. Other participants felt that faculty support SWDs too much and this skews the results of academic testing and authentic academic development of the student with the disability. This participant viewpoint echoes the literature that found that faculty members may hold negative viewpoints about SWDs' success (Leyser et al., 2011). This study found evidence of how higher education faculty perceive postsecondary SWDs. Currently, some faculty remain skeptical of SWDs. Based on the participants' responses, it would be beneficial to include training about specific disabilities and the diagnostic process. In turn, this would increase the academic integrity of SWDs and allow them to have a beneficial school experience, including bonding with faculty.

The participants' knowledge of higher education legislation was an area that remained consistent with the literature. It should be noted that none of the study participants had any knowledge of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) of 2008, which was passed into law to address the need for specific accommodations for postsecondary students with disabilities. This legislation stands, yet the HEOA has not been accepted by the mainstream or higher education institutions and their officers as disability special education law (Madaus et al., 2012).

Instead of referring to the HEOA, the ADA of 1990 remains the official legislation referenced in the higher education community (Zhang et al., 2010). Moreover, 10 out of 14 study participants referred to the ADA and accepted it as higher education law. However, none of the participants knew that the ADA is stated officially on the Sand University website. A future goal of this study is to add to the research and increase the recognition and notoriety of the HEOA of

2008. Since the HEOA addresses the specific needs of higher education SWDs, as it pertains to faculty resources and training to provide accommodations, upon its adoption in higher education, increased retention and graduation rates will transpire (Madaus et al., 2012).

One variation that should be noted pertains to the participants' age. Based on the literature, the researcher hypothesized that the age range of the participants would impact their knowledge of disability studies and SWDs. The researcher predicted that younger professors, those within the age range of 35 to 50, would have a greater understanding of disability law and appropriate teaching accommodations. According to the literature, the age and experience of faculty, including rank and tenure status, impacted the support sufficient level of SWDs (Buchanan et al., 2010; Vogel et al., 1999). Moreover, the faculty's age and experience were found to impact the positive interaction and success of SWDs, particularly students with ADHD (Buchanan et al., 2010; Vogel et al., 1999). Based on the study, the participants' specific teaching experiences with SWDs altered their perspective and understanding about appropriate teaching accommodations, rather than just their age range. All of the participants, regardless of age, require further development in the area of disabilities.

Notable differences were compassion and sensitivity toward SWDs. Daly-Cano et al. (2015) found that faculty felt SWDs must accept sole academic responsibility. Three of the study participants shared this sentiment that SWDs must be responsible during their postsecondary education. These three participants felt that SWDs must exhibit competence during higher education and prior to entering the workforce. Even though study participants found that students must be responsible for their academics, they disagreed with Black et al. (2014) who found that professors felt as if they had a burden or increased workload when providing accommodations to SWDs. Study participants agreed that as long as they had enough time to provide the academic

support, they were willing to do so (Jones, 2015). This acceptance of responsibility of service reflects the mission and culture of this University and site.

Summary

The recurring themes revealed during the analysis of the participants' responses included access, confidentiality, academic rigor, faculty/SWD relationship, culture, and compassion/sensitivity. These six themes proved the importance of a professor's knowledge of proper access to equal education: their ability to maintain confidentiality, their ability to implement appropriate academic rigor, cultivate relationships with SWDs, embrace the culture of their institution, and recognize the need for compassion and sensitivity.

Evidence of having received pedagogical training became a significant distinction among the faculty participants. Upon analyzing the barrier between the participant's viewpoints on providing accommodations to postsecondary SWDs and this population of students receiving accommodations, the researcher determined that ongoing training and education and understanding disabilities were at their core. The levels of pedagogical development, self-efficacy, and a continuous growth mindset are reflected by the participant's accounts of their experiences with SWDs.

The final chapter compares the findings of the study and address themes discovered in the literature. Next, it discusses the lessons learned from the study. It includes recommendations for potential changes in institutional policy, educational practice among faculty, and offers instructional strategies for higher education administration. Finally, it corroborates the need for faculty to receive further training at a national and global level.

Chapter 5: Discussion

One overarching goal of this study is to address the need for faculty training in adaptive pedagogy. This chapter discusses results of the study participants. The findings were obtained through interviews with higher education faculty at Sand University, who currently teach SWDs or have taught SWDs in the past. This chapter considers the lessons learned by this case study. The flagship recommendation for this study is to increase professional development for higher education faculty.

Research Questions

This study addressed the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the academic supports that faculty have provided to SWDs and were these interventions successful?

RQ2: What is the general pattern of the university model of supporting SWDs in the University?

RQ3: What do faculty recommend to their university and other universities for instructing SWDs?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to gain a greater perspective of what supports higher education faculty provide to SWDs and what interventions have been successful. This was accomplished by analyzing each of their experiences about teaching SWDs and by comparing their individual lived experiences. Each of the study participants offered a unique perspective, as their experiences were all different, yet altogether as a unit, they completed a solid picture of the experience of faculty at this institution. Another objective of this study was to highlight current instructional strategies utilized by faculty for SWDs, review the current policies in place at this institution, and to create a plan for the next steps, including future training for higher education faculty.

This study seeks to provide insight and guidance to higher education faculty members at Sand University, as well as to other faculty members at colleges and universities in the United States and higher education institutions globally. The results of this study are suggestive of a possible trend among the broader population. This chapter aims to give faculty members at Sand University an impression of their practice and offers some potential solutions for institutional policy, recommendations for administration, and suggested educational practices for faculty.

RQ1: Academic Supports Provided by the Faculty

Some study participants reported that during online and in-person class sessions they provided support for SWDs as the university has authorized. These supports included using a microphone and other assistive technology devices for SWDs who may be Deaf/Hard of Hearing (DHH). Moreover, some participants have recounted using closed captioning during their PowerPoint presentations. Some participants provided extra time during assessments as approved accommodations recommended by the OSA. One participant stressed that accommodations are recommendations and are not mandatory. On occasion, some participants reached out to the OSA when it was necessary for assistance in serving the SWD. They have also connected with the SWDs during the semester. Participants utilized the accommodations approved and stated within letters that the OSA has sent to them. Only one participant stated that she argued against the approved accommodations of her SWD with the Office of Student Accessibility. Several participants shared how they had embraced creativity in the classroom and how they have developed their teaching skills over the years, even without formal pedagogy or special education training.

RQ2: Pattern of the University Model Supporting SWDs

Sand University has several factors influencing the University model of supporting students with disabilities. In this sophisticated institutional model, the OSA plays a major role in the success of students with disabilities. The Provost oversees the OSA and instructional activity of all of the students. Since the OSA supports students with disabilities participants of this study are familiar with the workings of the OSA. As participants of this study have all taught students with disabilities at this site, each of them has had some interaction with the OSA. Participants have complied with the ADA law as it protects SWDs at the school site, however, they are unaware that this law is stated and located on the website of this university. Participants agreed that they do not reach out to the OSA unless there is the conflict between themselves and the student with a disability. Based on the participant responses, this study has demonstrated the need for more communication between faculty and University officers regarding SWDs and receiving their appropriate accommodations in higher education.

RQ3: Faculty Recommendations to Their University and Other Universities for Instructing SWDs

Participants shared recommendations. A lofty goal of the university would support all students upon acceptance to the university, by formally assessing them to determine if they require disability services. This would ensure that all students would have an equal opportunity to special education services if they needed them. Nobody students would be denied. Several participants stated that there should be alternative methods of assessments for SWDs. In addition to creative classroom solutions, the university would host a mandatory annual collaborative Adaptive Pedagogy conference, or online forum to share information about disabilities and adaptive pedagogy. One recommendation ensured compliance with the law by embedding a

mandatory disabilities training within employee's contract. A final recommendation is to support the faculty with a Full-time disability expert within each division of the university. Ultimately, this would serve as an option for professors, rather than only requesting assistance from the OSA.

Methodological Considerations

Before interviewing the participants of the study, the researcher reviewed pertinent literature, examined the policy structure, and various university documents. The researcher examined current teaching practices and educational policies that impact postsecondary SWDs. The researcher analyzed the participants' experiences based on Zoom-recorded interviews. Participants provided information about themselves, as professors, that informed the institutional development and shows how they strive for excellence at this university. The researcher reviewed public faculty data from additional websites. In addition to reviewing the participant's interviews, corresponded with various campus personnel. Additional data were found and analyzed from various Sand University websites. This analysis informed the triangulation process. The lessons learned from this case study were determined by the data analyzed from the participants' interviews, various forms of Internet data, and from the review of institutional policies (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Research Implications

The data revealed that even though higher education faculty have great expertise in their field and obtain formal degrees, they may still require training in the area of effectively instructing SWDs in the courses they teach. In addition to the need for training, distrust of SWDs and specifically, the diagnostic process of those with disabilities, emerged as a salient difficulty. While there tend to be obstacles that keep faculty from attending training, such as distance and

time commitments, the study participants unanimously agreed that training in adaptive education is needed for higher education faculty. Moreover, participants of the study encouraged institutional changes and offered profound suggestions. Consequently, it is the institution's responsibility to employ creative strategies for increasing faculty attendance at university training and overseeing its faculty's professional development opportunities.

Six key themes appearing below emanated from this study as a result of the interviews conducted among one group of participants.

Access

Participants' personal experiences revealed that they must understand the overall process that their college or university employs regarding an SWDs' academic program. In addition to understanding basic university procedures, it is essential for faculty to be aware of this process since they are responsible for implementing course instruction to the SWD. Furthermore, faculty should know that SWDs require a wide range of services and deserve equal access to all university resources. SWDs are supported by the faculty and the institution (officers) with the processes offered by the OSA.

The researcher founded that faculty who have an understanding of the concept of access and the institutional processes of their institution can implement appropriate accommodations to SWDs. Some participants shared that they reached out to the OSA to ensure that they are meeting their SWDs' needs. Some of the participants agreed since the university accepted SWDs, that it is the university's responsibility to ensure that SWDs are receiving an equal and appropriate education and have access to the same programs as the university's nondisabled peers.

Upon receiving training at Sand University, participants of this study shared that there was a heavy emphasis on UDL (Lombardi et al., 2011). Faculty should be trained in UDL and familiarize themselves with new technologies the university makes available. However, some of the study participants admitted that although they attended a virtual training hosted by Sand University, they are not using their newly acquired skills. Some participants shared that even after the Sand University training session, they were still unclear about how to provide technology, such as closed captioning in their videos. Campus officers have consistently offered to provide technical support.

SWDs should be able to access the curriculum without having to request additional resources; therefore, the necessary resources should be offered to all students by the faculty. To ensure that this system materializes uniformly at Sand University, faculty would agree and support training and the implementation of institutional processes for SWDs and have a clear understanding of the approved resources.

Confidentiality

Students who have self-disclosed their disabilities to faculty become vulnerable as a population as a result of the stigma attached to having a disability. The stigma of an SWD's disability can lead to suspicion, distrust, and dislike among faculty members. HIPAA laws protect SWDs from sharing their diagnosis with new professors; however, professors are still informed that a student has a disability and must provide their accommodations. Considering that there may be a stigma attached to disability status, it may cause SWDs to seek to keep their personal information concealed (Sealander et al., 1999). This is a complex area for both the SWD and the faculty member, as there is a power dynamic imbalance. As a few participants in the study shared there is always a possibility that faculty may distrust and be suspicious of an

SWD. These factors can exacerbate the situation for the SWD and impact their academic progress negatively. It would be beneficial for faculty to increase their awareness of SWDs to facilitate stronger connections with them, and ultimately decrease the stigma of those with disabilities.

Academic Rigor

It is noteworthy that academic rigor was an intertwined element that resonated throughout the accounts of the faculty experiences. For example, some participants shared that they offer exceptional teaching strategies along with academic rigor during their lessons. A few participants expressed that rather than lowering the expectations of the specific program, they choose to engage in creativity, utilize UDL, differentiation, and to employ strategies such as scaffolding lessons, and modeling to engage all students. For example, some participants openly admitted that they had changed their methods of instruction when they were assigned to teach SWDs. These participants discovered instructing SWDs did not weaken their instruction, but rather caused more creative exploration of the content (Draeger et al., 2013). Upon embracing the challenge of accommodating SWDs and recognizing a need for change in their procedures, these participants sought to foster a more conducive learning environment for all of their students. In the end, each of these participants concluded that they grew personally as teachers and professionals as a result of instructing postsecondary SWDs.

Faculty/SWD Relationships

The study highlights the complex nature of the faculty-SWD relationship. Given their expertise and experience in negotiating best practices and accommodating SWDs, higher education faculty members have much to offer when it comes to creative pedagogy and successful faculty SWD relationships. However, being mindful of the faculty member's work

situation and sometimes conflicting demands, such as deadlines, their increased self-awareness of stress and distrust can help them in their faculty role. Faculty must understand the value of the SWD/faculty relationship and their influence on student retention and graduation status of SWDs. Since most SWDs seek a mentor or role model during this educational time in their lives, faculty must be cognizant of their attitude toward SWDs and increase empathy toward this population (Lombardi et al., 2013).

It has been confirmed through the literature and in this case study that some postsecondary SWDs may receive academic and emotional support from building a trusting relationship with a faculty member (DuPaul, Pinho, et al., 2017). The trusting faculty-SWD relationship may enable the student to attend class regularly, complete assignments, and exhibit confidence when approaching academic tasks. Faculty members may teach self-awareness and growth techniques that have a lasting benefit on the SWD.

Culture

From the participants' shared stories and experiences, Sand University portrays a strong sense of Christian faith, mission, belonging, and leadership. Even though this is a faith-based university, participants shared that faculty remain skeptical of SWDs and distrust of the system that oversees their diagnostic process. Therefore, knowledge and education of disability studies and the diagnostic and assessment process for SWDs is recommended. Collaboration among colleagues may add support for accommodating SWDs. By establishing a collaborative group within their divisions at the university, faculty may feel more capable to provide the appropriate accommodations.

Institutional leaders, officers, and faculty at Sand University influence its culture. The faculty at this university recognizes the responsibility of the school to its students' education and

the need to exhibit an advanced level of competence in their subject matter. Even though they have reached a superior level of academic standing, professors at this university recognize the need for ongoing professional development and adult learning. This training could be achieved through collaboration with peers within subject divisions, continuous professional development, and regular contact with academic officers, such as academic deans and the OSA.

In addition to professional development, faculty may attend professional conferences, lectures, and workshops developed by academic organizations related to education, special education, or disability studies. Faculty may advance in their instruction by engaging in authentic reflection and self-efficacy.

It should also be noted that Sand University needs diversity training in the areas of disability. In the past 3 years, there has been an increase in diversity training at this university; however, disability studies have not been part of the diversity training. Outside speakers and experts in the disability field should be considered to present topics through seminars, webinars, workshops, and lectures to engage faculty at Sand University. This study observed that the consideration for (or lack of) disability topics seriously affected the culture at this university. The researcher seeks to develop a faculty training development model that will reshape how faculty view SWDs and those with disabilities.

Compassion/Sensitivity

Faculty may realize the necessity of acting compassionately and sensitively toward SWDs. By exhibiting compassion toward SWDs, faculty can achieve a greater understanding of this population and decrease the stigma attached to disabilities. Compassion and sensitivity are traits that can be developed over time and, therefore, improve. These traits can be taught and

merged with self-efficacy and growth mindset training (Bandura, 1997). Consequently, when faculty demonstrate compassion and sensitivity, SWDs can flourish under their tutelage.

A significant number of participants described their experiences with a person with a disability. This person could have been a family member or a friend or someone they taught. Through the affiliation of a person with a disability, their concept of compassion and sensitivity was heightened. Research indicates that faculty with more positive attitudes may have a personal connection with someone with a disability (Leyser et al., 2011). More than half of the study participants shared personal accounts involving somebody with a disability and how these connections have impacted their professional careers. Several participants recounted that knowing someone with a disability made them more sensitive as a professor. Personal connections with a person with a disability changed their perception of SWDs as a professor, particularly by increasing their sensibility toward SWDs.

Significant Elements of the Study

As the preceding themes were analyzed and synthesized, two significant elements surfaced. The first element was the need for further training in the area of disability studies and adaptive pedagogy. As higher education faculty or experts in their field, the study has proved that they still may require training in pedagogy. The second element that came to light was a need for a deeper understanding of the institutional policies and disability law, specifically in the area of higher education law. With further professional development and educational opportunities in adaptive pedagogy and disability law, higher education faculty will show improvement in the following areas: (a) relying less heavily on the OSA, (b) forming positive connections with SWDs, (c) demonstrating more confidence during instruction, (d) increasing their knowledge of disability studies, and (e) developing competence in the implementation of

the appropriate accommodations for SWDs. The specific outcomes may result in the increased skills and knowledge of adaptive pedagogy for higher education faculty that will ultimately increase retention and graduation of postsecondary SWDs.

Lessons Learned

Improve Faculty Instructional Performance

Currently, Sand University provides initial first-year induction programs, and professional development is lacking in disability content. Faculty and staff have confirmed that time and scheduling conflicts have often interfered with this much-needed training. Sand University has recently promoted inclusive education through UDL. However, because of different life experiences and backgrounds, professors have different knowledge of SWDs. Consequently, these differences in faculty experiences impact their ability to connect with SWDs. It would be beneficial for this university to include professional development or training in disability studies to lessen the gap and improve faculty instructional performance.

Cultivating Personal Connections With SWDs

The OSA is required to render services for SWDs and provide available resources to faculty. Faculty only obtain and utilize the OSA's services when they are needed during a semester; however, faculty would be better equipped to support SWDs during their journey. Faculty who form connections with SWDs exhibit behaviors such as spending extra time, extending their office hours, explaining assignments, listening to the SWD, and providing positive emotional support when needed. When faculty members understand a disability, they trust the student and build a stronger connection (Darling-Hammond, 2000; DuPaul, Pinho, et al., 2017). Consequently, faculty have a better teaching experience as a result of cultivating personal connections with SWDs.

Encourage Student Collaboration

It is suggested from the results of this study that faculty members with high self-efficacy exhibit greater confidence during instruction. In turn, faculty will likely have a greater sense of personal accomplishment, hold higher expectations of academic rigor toward student achievement, and accept responsibility for altering instruction to increase all students' learning (Lotter et al., 2016). Faculty members who embrace these changes demonstrate a greater capacity for creativity and encourage student collaboration (Siemens & Baker, 2012).

Faculty's Personal Self-Efficacy

Personal self-efficacy is the belief that a person is capable of successfully delivering and executing specific lesson outcomes. The second dimension of efficacy, outcome expectancy, is a person's belief that their performance of a task will have a positive outcome on others, particularly SWDs (Lotter et al., 2016). Faculty members who are knowledgeable about disabilities can adapt their instruction and communicate more effectively with all of their students, including SWDs (Schreifels, 2013).

Practice Empathy

When faculty members have connections with SWDs, listen with an empathetic heart, and embrace the knowledge of disability policy, they increase their ability to implement the appropriate accommodations for SWDs (Marshak et al., 2010). In addition to being well-versed in adaptive pedagogy, faculty need to employ appropriate accommodations without reservation or doubt. When faculty members have obtained these goals for SWDS, it is expected that the result will be that their SWDs will graduate and become upstanding citizens in society.

Positive Relationships With Faculty Members

Postsecondary SWDs will continue to attend colleges and universities; however, there may be gaps in their learning, they may have difficulty establishing relationships with faculty members, and there may be issues with the confidentiality of their disability and the stigma attached to their disability (Vogel et al., 1999). In addition to these concerns, SWDs may continue trying to conceal their disability that may impact their academic status and progress toward graduation (Vannest et al., 2011). Moreover, SWDs may continue to leave school before they graduate (Tinto, 1988). The literature reviewed was corroborated by the participant responses.

Creating institutional policy changes in higher education, such as increased professional development opportunities for faculty, would promote a foundation for SWDs to receive their accommodations. As a result, graduation rates of postsecondary SWDs will likely increase, and the dropout rate of SWDs, 72%, will decrease (NCES, 2020). Furthermore, postsecondary SWDs will have greater opportunities to enter the workforce and compete with nondisabled peers (Petcu et al., 2014).

Recommendations

The study results have richly illustrated educational practices and powerful experiences among higher education faculty. Fellow researchers, institutional officers, and policy makers may learn about the faculty's awareness and knowledge of accommodating postsecondary SWDs. Even though these goals are designed for higher education faculty, ultimately, they are for the good of the institution, as well as for all of the officers within the institution. Table 8 shows the recommendations for higher education faculty. These recommendations are a compilation from the relevant literature, the participants, and the researcher.

Table 8

List of Recommendations for Training Higher Education Faculty

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tailored training: Universities should have a specific program presented to faculty with material specifically created for them on disability topics such as pertinent disability laws, appropriate accommodations for postsecondary SWDs, disability terminology, and strategies for adaptive pedagogy
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Course equivalent of adaptive pedagogy: universities should offer an equivalent state credential or partial degree for courses offered in adaptive pedagogy for higher education faculty.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• University Expectations of New Hire Competency: During the initial year as a professor in a higher education setting, newly hired faculty will demonstrate proficiency in instructing and implementing accommodations for SWDs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continuous Professional Development: universities will offer continuous professional development opportunities to facilitate faculty growth specifically in disability studies at least once a year at the university or higher education setting.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disabilities Liaison: An assigned specific liaison designated to represent disability studies within each division of the university. This liaison would act as the expert in special education services, in order to answer questions, provide information, and serve as a resource within each division.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Updated policies and programs: Institutional officers would have more involvement and oversee disability programs in conjunction with the OSA with the end goal of keeping the university's policies and programs current.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaboration with the University's Center for Teaching and Training: To ensure that disability studies are addressed and taught to all faculty, collaboration with the teaching, training, or coaching division of universities will be enforced. Consequently, more staff would be certified and trained and authorized to teach disability studies to higher education faculty.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-efficacy Training for Faculty: a specific course in self-efficacy, confidence and motivation training for faculty in order to ensure that they are confident, well-versed, and able to transfer their knowledge of disability studies and strategies for SWDs into their classroom setting.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Universal Higher Education Faculty Training Model: Based on a model of universal standards for training higher education faculty, all universities and higher education settings in the United States will adhere to the code of standards established within this model as it pertains to disabilities studies and adaptive pedagogy. A future goal of this model would be to introduce and enforce it to various universities around the world.

The results of this study illuminate a gap in academic research and literature. One means to address the gap is through a national faculty training program and for universities to train professors in special education topics and disability studies. It is fundamental to keep in mind that although this institution has a reputation and record of achieving such goals of high student retention and high graduation rate, each faculty member has a responsibility to meet the needs of SWDs. Ultimately, even though there may be ample training programs for higher education faculty, this study has proved the need for a more inclusive approach for professional

development, as well as the integration of adaptive education and disabilities training in higher education.

National and Global Faculty Training Needs

This study addresses the need for further training of higher education faculty at a national level and global level. In the United States, formal training for faculty varies by institution, and, therefore, changes to national policies should be considered. Globally, the Sustainable Development Goals 4 Quality Education, addresses global educational needs, yet its focus remains on students (Griggs et al., 2013). Sustainable Development Goals 4 scarcely mentions resources for SWDs or guidelines for training higher education faculty, even though higher education faculty training is needed in all nations. For example, in a study from India, Zodpey et al., (2016) discovered in their research on faculty development programs for medical teachers that there is a need for formulating a national strategy for faculty development that specifically increases the number of medical teachers as well as the quality of medical education. Moreover, in South Africa, Brown (2008) found that teacher migration and teacher mobility negatively impacts education quality in higher education. Other nations, such as India and Africa, share the need for higher education training and have goals that align with this study's higher education faculty training needs.

The researcher noted that higher education faculty training in other nations is a great need, yet there is a significant gap in academic research in postsecondary students with disabilities in other countries that merit investigation. Although faculty training is needed throughout the United States, as well as other countries, this case study occurred exclusively within one university campus in Southern California and focused on higher education faculty

who teach students with disabilities. Further research is appropriate in other countries by other researchers or as a poststudy.

Future Studies. The researcher recommends a future study in which SWDs would be interviewed to gain their perspectives of appropriate accommodations in higher education. The lessons yielded from these interviews would be informative and add to formal literature. Furthermore, this study would aid in advancing institutional policies. The future study would complement this current faculty study and benefit those working in higher education.

Given more time and funding, the researcher could expand on this current study to do further research in (a) a public university, (b) other countries, (c) with a broader faculty group, and (d) with a diverse group of faculty. By including these particular groups in a study of higher education faculty, the findings might be varied and informative to the higher education community.

Public University Setting. By conducting a study involving higher education faculty would be beneficial at a public University setting since a researcher would be able to expand the research based on the size of the faculty population. Most public universities are larger in size, less expensive and include more students than private universities (Groen & White, 2004). Additionally, public universities may offer a greater number of institutional officers to serve students.

Other Countries. Conducting a study involving higher education faculty in foreign countries would inform the leaders of global education and provide them with this faculty perspective. Moreover, the researcher would be able to analyze and compare accommodations provided in the United States versus accommodations provided (or not provided) in other

countries. The researcher could determine the greatest need in other countries for students with disabilities. Finally, a study in a foreign country would allow for information about faculty attitudes towards students with disabilities and the existing stigma of disabilities to be recorded for other social scientists.

A Broader Faculty Group. The current study consisted of faculty in similar academic fields. For example, a few of the participants were members of the Language Department at Sand University. Having a broader faculty group with a greater variety of academic fields would enhance a future study. Furthermore, ten or more participants were within similar age ranges with the close proximity of tenure. Finally, half of the participants of this study had family members with disabilities, that clearly impacted their performance as professors. In a future study, participants may be purposefully selected specifically for having no connection a person with a disability, which would allow for a different perspective. By including a broader range of group demographics, specifically age, tenure status, and distinct academic fields, a future study would reap a wider range of results.

A Diverse Group of Faculty. It is noted that the participants of the current study were white or Caucasian and were not persons of color. In a future study, it would be beneficial to include faculty of diverse backgrounds, specifically African Americans, Latino or Latin X, African, Asian, Pacific Islanders, Indian, and other faculty of diverse backgrounds. It is essential to include faculty members with diverse backgrounds to gain a greater perspective of teaching SWDs and learn of the experiences of those with diverse backgrounds. In a university setting, including faculty with diverse backgrounds, diversity creates greater self-awareness, reduces fear, and improves the global impact. Conducting a study with faculty of diverse backgrounds would improve the research in the field of higher education and adaptive education.

Conclusion

This research is a substantial basis for positive educational reform, as it aims to increase SWD retention and graduation rates at this institution. The findings of this study captured the perspectives of higher education faculty members in Southern California and inspired further discussion of the challenges of serving SWDs at the postsecondary level. Higher education faculty have the power to impact the lives of postsecondary SWDs. The higher education faculty who participated in the study remained hopeful about the institution as they shared their perspectives, challenges of higher education, accomplishments as professors, and needs that would improve their practice regarding their instruction and providing accommodations to SWDs. As there is a significant increase of postsecondary SWDs, this change within education has impacted faculty who have accepted the role to teach these students. Greater collaboration among divisions at the university level and communication between university officers and faculty members will increase the overall success of students with disabilities. This is a path toward realizing our humane and Democratic ideals of a society that is fair and just.

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APPENDIX A

Notice of Approval of IRB



Pepperdine University
24255 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, CA 90263
TEL: 310-506-4000

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Date: September 08, 2020

Protocol Investigator Name: Toby Baker

Protocol #: 20-03-1306

Project Title: Support for Students with Disabilities: How awareness and accommodations differ across faculty members within the postsecondary context.

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Toby Baker:

Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations 45 CFR 46.101 that govern the protections of human subjects.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit an amendment to the IRB. Since your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the IRB and documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at community.pepperdine.edu/irb.

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chair

cc: Mrs. Katy Carr, Assistant Provost for Research

APPENDIX B

Research Interview Guide

Faculty Questionnaire

1. What teaching strategies/accommodations do you use to instruct postsecondary SWDs?
2. How would you describe the level of importance of faculty-SWD relationships have on increasing postsecondary program retention?
3. How would you describe your proficiency in knowledge of special education laws?
4. What strategies do you use for SWDs who require intense modifications to their academic programs?
5. Describe how you approach and interact with colleagues in the accessibility department on the behalf of an SWD?
6. Describe the importance of faculty attitude toward a postsecondary SWD.
7. To what extent do you believe faculty impact SWDs' overall academic achievement/graduation?
8. To what extent do you feel faculty at higher education institutions require training in special education laws and instructional techniques for teaching SWDs?
9. To what extent do you feel the institution has a responsibility to support postsecondary SWDs?
10. What suggestions would you have for postsecondary faculty members and university administrators as it pertains to increasing SWD retention and supporting their academic success?

APPENDIX C

Recruitment E-Mail

Hi everyone!

My name is Toby, a third-year Ph.D. candidate at Pepperdine University. I am collecting data on the experiences of higher education faculty, best classroom practices, and accommodations for postsecondary students with disabilities.

I am recruiting eligible participants to complete an online questionnaire that should take no more than 10 minutes to fill out. I would appreciate your consideration and review of the following criteria. Please be certain that you are signed into your Pepperdine email account. Firefox is the preferred browser.

Eligibility criteria:

- Employed as higher education faculty/university professor
- Taught Postsecondary students with disabilities

Direct link to the questionnaire: <https://forms.gle/X8MCjvjomw1WnW1SA>

This study has been reviewed by the Pepperdine University's IRB. If you have any questions about this research, please contact me at toby.baker@pepperdine.edu

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Toby Baker

Toby Tomlinson Baker
Pepperdine University, Ph.D. Candidate



APPENDIX D

Informed Consent

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES TITLE OF THE STUDY

**SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: HOW AWARENESS AND
ACCOMMODATIONS DIFFER ACROSS FACULTY MEMBERS WITHIN THE
POSTSECONDARY CONTEXT.**

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by (*Toby Tomlinson Baker, Doctoral Candidate and Dr. Eric Hamilton, Ph.D.*) at the Pepperdine University. Your participation is voluntary. You should read the information below, and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether to participate. Please take as much time as you need to read the consent form. You may also decide to discuss participation with your family or friends. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form. You will be given a copy of this form.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of accommodations for postsecondary SWDs. Furthermore, it will determine to what extent campus supports, such as accessibility interaction, faculty relationships, and peer assistance have been provided at universities and other college settings. The key objective of this study is to add to the literature so that higher education faculty members and personnel of higher education institutions could improve the academic experience of postsecondary SWDs and advance the capacity of effectively teaching postsecondary SWDs.

STUDY PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

1. *Answer 8-10 pre-determined questions.*
2. *You may preview the questions.*
3. *Interviews may be audio/Zoom recorded.*
4. *If you do not wish to be audio recorded, you may still participate in the study.*
5. *The interview should not exceed 45 minutes.*
6. *Your identity will be kept confidential.*

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

Individuals will be asked to reflect on and expose their teaching experiences. A level of discomfort may be experienced in the reflection and discussion process. Additional risks are a breach of confidentiality and breach of identification. The researcher understands that all studies have potential risks. Therefore, the researcher has a) prepared for necessary breaks for the subjects, b) will offer subjects online materials and contacts for medical services if necessary, and c) an option to discontinue the interview.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

It is the intention of this study to bring to light the current experiences of higher education faculty and to examine the special education policies of higher education institutions. The main goal is to improve teaching practices, increase training, and reduce social stigma regarding students with disabilities.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The researcher will keep participant records for this study confidential as far as permitted by law. However, if required to do so by law, the researcher will disclose confidential information about subjects in this study. The principal investigator and the funding agency and Pepperdine's University's Human Subjects Protection Program (HSPP) may access the data. The HSPP reviews and monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research subjects. All necessary precautions will be taken to ensure that participants are adequately informed that their identity will be kept confidential. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants. The manner in which confidentiality is maintained will be disclosed in the invitation to participate and on the survey itself. Participants will acknowledge their understanding of the use of the interviews and classroom observations, the confidentiality safeguards, and the consent to voluntarily will be documented via their signing of the consent form. Interviews will be conducted online in a private location for security purposes. Data will be stored on the researcher's hard drive and will be password protected. Hard Copies will be printed as a backup source of data. Hard Copy data will be stored in the researcher's personal residence in a locked safe. When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no identifiable information will be used.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

INVESTIGATOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION

I understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries I may have concerning the

research herein described. I understand that I may contact: *Toby Baker at*
[REDACTED] *cell: [REDACTED] or Dr. Eric Hamilton at*
[REDACTED].if I have any other questions or concerns about this research.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT – IRB CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant or research in general please contact Dr. Judy Ho, Chairperson of the Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board at:

Pepperdine University 6100 Center Drive Suite 500
Los Angeles, CA 90045,
310-568-5753 or gpsirb@pepperdine.edu.

I have read the information provided above. I have been given a chance to ask questions. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Participant:

X _____

Signature of Research Participant

Date:

I have explained the research to the participants and answered all of their questions. In my judgment the participants are knowingly, willingly and intelligently agreeing to participate in this study. They have the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research study and all of the various components. They also have been informed participation is voluntarily and that they may discontinue their participation in the study at any time, for any reason.

Name of Person Obtaining Consent:

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Date:

APPENDIX E

Informed Consent

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

Graduate School of Psychology and Education

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES THAT EXCEED MINIMAL RISK

TITLE OF THE STUDY

**SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: HOW AWARENESS AND
ACCOMMODATIONS DIFFER ACROSS FACULTY MEMBERS WITHIN THE
POSTSECONDARY CONTEXT.**

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by (*Toby Tomlinson Baker, Doctoral Candidate and Dr. Eric Hamilton, Ph.D.*) at the Pepperdine University. Your participation is voluntary. You should read the information below, and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether to participate. Please take as much time as you need to read the consent form. You may also decide to discuss participation with your family or friends. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form. You will be given a copy of this form.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of accommodations for postsecondary SWDs. Furthermore, it will determine to what extent campus supports, such as accessibility interaction, faculty relationships, and peer assistance have been provided at universities and other college settings. The key objective of this study is to add to the literature so that higher education faculty members and personnel of higher education institutions could improve the academic experience of postsecondary SWDs and advance the capacity of

effectively teaching postsecondary SWDs.

STUDY PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

7. *Answer 8-10 pre-determined questions.*
8. *You may preview the questions.*
9. *Interviews may be audio/Zoom recorded.*
10. *If you do not wish to be audio recorded, you may still participate in the study.*
11. *The interview should not exceed 45 minutes.*
12. *Your identity will be kept confidential.*

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

Individuals will be asked to reflect on and expose their teaching experiences. A level of discomfort may be experienced in the reflection and discussion process. Additional risks are a breach of confidentiality and breach of identification. The researcher understands that all studies have potential risks. Therefore, the researcher has a) prepared for necessary breaks for the subjects, b) will offer subjects online materials and contacts for medical services if necessary, and c) an option to discontinue the interview.

GREATER THAN MINIMAL RISK:

Participating in the study means that there is a potential risk as well as a probability of discomfort that is anticipated in the research which may be greater than what one would ordinarily encounter in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations. More specifically, individuals will be asked to discuss and share their previous teaching styles, behaviors, interventions, and experiences with SWDs. A level of discomfort may be experienced in the recall process. Additional risks are breach of confidentiality and breach of identification.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

It is the intention of this study to bring to light the current practices and beliefs of higher education faculty and to examine the special education policies of higher education institutions. The main goal is to improve teaching practices, increase training, and reduce social stigma regarding students with disabilities.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The researcher will keep participant records for this study confidential as far as permitted by law. However, if required to do so by law, the researcher will disclose confidential information about subjects in this study. The principal investigator and the funding agency and Pepperdine's University's Human Subjects Protection Program (HSPP) may access the data. The HSPP

reviews and monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research subjects. All necessary precautions will be taken to ensure that participants are adequately informed that their identity will be kept confidential. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants. The manner in which confidentiality is maintained will be disclosed in the invitation to participate and on the survey itself. Participants will acknowledge their understanding of the use of the interviews and classroom observations, the confidentiality safeguards, and the consent to voluntarily will be documented via their signing of the consent form. Interviews will be conducted online in a private location for security purposes. Data will be stored on the researcher's hard drive and will be password protected. Hard Copies will be printed as a backup source of data. Hard Copy data will be stored in the researcher's personal residence in a locked safe. When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no identifiable information will be used.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

INVESTIGATOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION

I understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries I may have concerning the research herein described. I understand that I may contact:
if I have any other questions or concerns about this research.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT – IRB CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant or research in general please contact Dr. Judy Ho, Chairperson of the Graduate & Professional

Schools Institutional Review Board:

Pepperdine University 6100 Center Drive Suite 500

Los Angeles, CA 90045, 310-568-5753

gpsirb@pepperdine.edu.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I have read the information provided above. I have been given a chance to ask questions.

My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

AUDIO/VIDEO/PHOTOGRAPHS

☐ *I agree to be audio recorded*

☐ *I do not want to be audio recorded*

Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant

Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I have explained the research to the participants and answered all of their questions. In my judgment the participants are knowingly, willingly and intelligently agreeing to participate in this study. They have the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research study and all of the various components. They also have been informed participation is voluntarily and that they may discontinue their participation in the study at any time, for any reason.

Name of Person Obtaining Consent:

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Date

APPENDIX F

Confidentiality Agreement

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

Graduate School of Education and Psychology

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: HOW AWARENESS AND
ACCOMMODATIONS DIFFER ACROSS FACULTY MEMBERS WITHIN THE
POSTSECONDARY CONTEXT.

I, _____, individually and on behalf of _____
[name of business or entity if applicable], do hereby agree to maintain full confidentiality in
regards to any and all documents, audiotapes, videotapes, and oral or written
documentation obtained for the purposes of this study. Furthermore, I also agree:

1. To hold in strictest confidence the identification of any individual that may be
inadvertently revealed during the transcription of any documents, including audio-taped or
live oral interviews, or in any associated documents;
2. To not disclose any information received for profit, gain, or otherwise;
3. To not make copies of any documents, audiotapes, videotapes, or computerized files of
the transcribed interview texts, unless specifically requested to do so by
_____ [person or organization borrowed from and/or whatever is
applicable];
4. To store all study-related documents, audiotapes, videotapes and materials in a safe,
secure location as long as they are in my possession;
5. To return all documents, audiotapes, videotapes and study-related documents to
_____ [person or organization borrowed from and/or whatever is
applicable] in a complete and timely manner.

6. To delete all electronic files containing study-related documents from my computer hard drive and any backup devices.

I am aware that I can be held legally liable for any breach of this confidentiality agreement and for any harm incurred by individuals if I disclose identifiable information contained in the audiotapes, videotapes and/or paper files to which I will have access. I am further aware that if any breach of confidentiality occurs, I will be fully subject to the laws of the State of California.

Principal Investigators name_____

Principal Investigators Signature_____

Date_____